

Quarterly magazine of the National Council of Priests of Australia

The Swag

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ABOUT THE NCP

The National Council of Priests (NCP) is an Australia-wide organisation of Catholic Clergy (Bishops, Priests and Deacons) and Associate Members (Lay, Religious and Seminarians) who join together to support each other in their ministry in the Church. Founded in 1970 in the Spirit of Vatican II, the NCP is committed to the fraternity and further education of clergy and to representing clergy in the public forum. *The Swag* is published quarterly (March, June, September & December) by the National Council of Priests of Australia as a service to Catholic clergy of Australia, and through them to the Church and the wider community.

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Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples are respectfully advised that this publication may contain the words, names, images and/or descriptions of people who have passed away.

James Clarke



A few weeks ago, I was having dinner with some of my confreres at our Ministry to Priests, now referred to as Clergy Life and Ministry, support group. During our meal the conversation turned to the issue of Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD). This topic came up as most of us at the dinner are chaplains to major public and private hospitals situated within our parish boundaries.

The question arose as to who among us had administered the anointing of the sick to patients who had requested VAD. None of us was able to answer the

question because when each of us was called to the hospital for end of life care, we were not informed if the patient in question was undergoing VAD.

During our discussion, the issue of palliative care was raised. Anyone who has experienced a loved one or family member suffering from a terminal illness will understand the feeling of helplessness and the trauma of loss. They will also appreciate the work of the palliative care doctors and nurses whose dedication to their patients also helps to alleviate the stress of the members of the family. The conclusion was reached that many people including many Catholics do not understand the difference between Voluntary Assisted Dying and palliative care. VAD is often mistaken for palliative treatment and palliative care mistakenly assumed to be the same as assisted suicide. This is understanding of the two forms of end of life treatment is a cause for concern as it is a source of moral confusion. This confusion can lead ordinary Catholic men and women into believing that there is no difference between the two.

Thankfully the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference will be issuing a directive for priests and those involved

in hospital chaplaincy on how to care for those patients who seek end of life care through VAD. For those of us engaged in hospital ministry, this will be welcomed, as we do not wish to be perceived as uncaring or judgemental in our attitude towards the pastoral care of those who choose VAD.

NCP Election

I would now like to address the membership of the NCP. My term as Chairman expires at the end of this year, and at that time I will have completed nine plus years on the NCP executive – six years as Chairman. While I have deemed it a privilege to serve on the executive and as Chairman, I do not wish to appear that I am “hogging” the position, or preventing any other aspiring member who wishes to take on the position of Chairman. Therefore brothers, I encourage you to think seriously about taking on this important role. This is our organisation and “we are priests best when we are priests together” and united in the same mission.

NCP exists for you and because of you.

Yours in His Priesthood,
James Clarke ☕

Election for NCP Chairman

1 JANUARY 2024 TO 31 DECEMBER 2026

I hereby call for nominations for the position of Chairman
of the National Council of Priests of Australia.

Jamie Collins, NCP Secretary

- Both the person being nominated and the nominator must be financial NCP members and both must sign the nomination form.
- The term of office is three (3) years with the option of nominating for a further three (3) years. (Maximum term for all committee positions – six (6) consecutive years.)
- The term of office will commence on 01/01/2024 and conclude on 31/12/2026.
- Nomination forms must be received at the National Office by midnight 30 September 2023 (mail or email).



Peter Matheson



At nearly 87 years of age Pope Francis continues to enrage some, and engage many. In July, when many desert Rome in the blazing heat of summer, Francis appointed a new head of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. It turned out to be an old (young) friend, Archbishop Victor Manuel Fernández of La Plata (Argentina). He turned 61 in July, but has been one of Francis' most trusted theological advisors and ghost-writers, going back to Buenos Aires days.

Together, apparently, they wrote the final document at the 2007 conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM) in Aparecida. Fernandez would have been 45 at the time. Francis will make Fernández a cardinal in the upcoming consistory that will happen just before the Synod on Synodality gets under way in Rome. The new list of cardinals and the approved list of invited electors to the Synod clearly indicates again that the Pope is "enlarging the space of our tent."

In early July the Royal Commission report on the Robodebt scheme was handed down. Catherine Holmes, the Commissioner who led the Royal Commission into the scheme, was widely praised for her wide-ranging investigation. The scheme was illegal. Many people suffered because of Robodebt persecution. Some people suicided because of the harassment. The harassment went on for years, and it seems from the report that many in the Public Service and in Government could not have cared less. It is sad that the moral sense of many in the Australian Public Service and Government was so lacking for so long.

Does this moral insensitivity also affect the debate on the Voice? The debate is clouded by so many differing "voices." Some see the Voice as a racial issue offending constitutional democracy of one person one vote. Others see it as a moral issue, and if we don't vote Yes, we condemn our First Nations people to continuing discrimination and diminishment. Noel Pearson sees the referendum as our date with destiny. The "Sense of the Faithful" website published an editorial in June about the upcoming referendum, and were saddened that the Australian Catholic Bishops have not come out publicly to support the Voice. Despite strong words supporting Aboriginal culture and spirituality by St Pope John Paul II in Alice Springs in 1986, and by Pope Francis speaking about recognising, listening to and making decisions concerning Indigenous peoples (see *Querida Amazonia*, par 26), it seems the ACBC have been totally silent about the referendum. The editorial, which we reprint in this edition of *The Swag*, wonders if the bishops consider the Voice a political issue, rather than a moral one.

The origin of the Voice referendum is in the Statement from the Heart. We recall the homily given by Sarah Bachelard at the opening of Parliament this year, reprinted in the last edition of *The Swag*. Speaking directly to the Prime Minister she said in part: "Our nation has received the great gift of a Statement from the Heart of the first peoples of this land. This is a wisdom text. Born of heartbreak – of long and continuing suffering, yet marked by an extraordinary generosity of spirit open to the possibility that the wounds of our history might be reconciled for the good of all – the Statement from the Heart can only truly be heard and enacted when those to whom it is addressed make contact with and listen from their own heart. This is its gift and challenge to us all." She went on to say: "It's an invitation to our nation as a whole to grow in wisdom's way."

A growth in wisdom might also lead to growth in the moral sensitivity of the nation. Is politics trumping morals? Will the ACBC join NATSICC and other Catholic groups, and come out publicly to support a "Yes" vote in the referendum?

The upcoming referendum, and the Synod on Synodality, are the two key

issues confronting us as winter thaws. Concerning the referendum, we reprint with permission the homily that Frank Brennan SJ gave for the 12th Sunday of Ordinary time (25 June). It was just after the feast of Saints John Fisher and Thomas More, and just after Parliament passed the legislation necessary for the referendum on the Voice. Frank recalled the political trial of Thomas More. For More, process, precision and conscience all mattered. In reference to the referendum Frank added "Had there been greater precision and better process from our elected leaders, each of us would undoubtedly have a much easier decision to make in October." Frank strongly comes out for a "Yes" vote.

Concerning the Synod on Synodality there are wildly fluctuating expectations. We remember Cardinal Pell's words just before his sudden death about the Synod being a "toxic nightmare" and the documentation "full of neo-Marxist jargon."

The German Synodal Way had struck problems with Rome. Bill Uren SJ commented on this in early May admitting some loss of faith in a positive outcome for the upcoming Synod, given that the curia continued to hold such strong sway. But six weeks later when the *Instrumentum Laboris* emerged Bill found reason for new faith and hope. Both articles are reprinted here with Bill's, and Eureka Street's, permission.

As the last edition went to Press we learned of the death of Bob Maguire, well known to the NCP and so many others. Bob had been editor of the NCP newsletter in those days before it became *The Swag*. A number of people contributed memories and eulogies of the part Bob played in their lives. Instead we have chosen to publish the homily delivered by Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane at Bob's Requiem in St Pat's Cathedral, Melbourne, on May 5. It beautifully summed up Bob's influence on Mark's life, but also the complexities of Bob's personality and ministry. May Bob rest in peace.

Peter Wilkinson continues his interesting examination of Australian seminaries in this edition. Part 2 looks at developments up to 1885. His first article about the failure of the Polding Benedictine dream occasioned a very interesting letter about the negative role

of John Joseph Therry (see *Letters to the Editor*).

In our autumn edition we published an obituary for Dick Buchhorn, former PP of Boggabilla NSW, who was responsible for writing the 1978 Social Justice Statement for the Bishops of Australia, the first such statement about the situation of First Nations people. Gai Smith in Redfern has been busy organising Dick's many papers and letters and came across an article penned by Dick in preparation for the 1979 NCP Sydney Conference.

She has sent it to us, aware that we don't have a "blast from the past" section, but wondered if we might publish it. A number of the issues Dick wrote about in 1978 concerning church and parish renewal seem very relevant still today, and we

happily publish Dick's article, simply entitled: "Some ideas seeking an airing." You can read Gai's letter in the *Letters to the Editor* section.

There was significant anguish in Canberra and surrounds in early winter when the ACT Government chose to acquire Calvary hospital. We invited Tony Percy, previous Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Canberra Goulburn, to reflect on the acquisition, and we publish his thoughts here. He comments on our continuing need for free and fair societies, and notes the rule of law and religious freedom are foundational to these societies. Round one has been lost, he writes, but the fight has just begun.

Professional supervision of priests was one of the recommendations of the

Royal Commission into Institutional Sexual Abuse, and we publish reflections from Ian McGinnity and Brian Moloney on the value of this practice that they have experienced in ministry.

Other interesting articles are included. There is one from John Tidey, a journalist, who has written an appreciation of the role of *The Tablet*. Another, "A View from the Pews," agonises about the lack of lay involvement in the forming of a group of parishes in south-east Melbourne as a Mission. Pat Flanagan reflects on the use of, and lack of, incense in our liturgies. Frank O'Shea muses on the Irish influence in our Catholicism. And so on. With delight, we also include Michael McGirr's "Blessing for the new Financial Year." Enjoy the read! ☺



Homily at Bob Maguire's Requiem

ARCHBISHOP MARK COLERIDGE

This homily was preached at the Requiem Mass for Fr Bob at St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne on 5 May 2023. It is reprinted here with the permission of Archbishop Mark.



In my seventy-fifth year, as I move to the end of my working life as priest and bishop, I speak words of farewell to the man who more than any other led me to the priesthood; and I do so in this cathedral where I was ordained deacon, priest and bishop. So as I look back across the life of Bob Maguire, I look back across my own life as well.

I first met Fr Bob when I was in my late teens and he in his early thirties. I was a university student, with vague thoughts

of diplomacy as a career; he was a young priest, appointed chaplain to a fast-fading organisation known as the Catholic Young Men's Society. Bob was determined to give it new life; and that meant gathering together a group of students like me to serve on the Executive. I said yes, not because of any great faith or commitment, but because some university mates of mine had also said yes.

I'd grown up in a very staid Catholic parish with an Irish parish priest who

had been there for forty years. He was a decent and cultured man, but there was nothing in him that stirred thoughts of the priesthood in me.

In Bob Maguire, however, I saw something I'd never struck before – a rare human vitality, a passion for the Gospel, an enthusiasm for all that was emerging in the Church from the Second Vatican Council. Bob made the Catholic Church and the priesthood seem exciting, even fun. He called us all on an adventure; and that call has deeply shaped not only my life but the life of so many others.

Over the years, I learnt of Bob's difficult early life as the fifth and youngest child of Jim and Annie Maguire who had migrated from Scotland. Jim, it seems, was a man troubled by alcohol and anger; Annie was loving and devout. The family moved from place to place and lived in poverty of a kind Bob never forgot. By the time he was fifteen both his parents were dead. Ernest Hemingway once wrote that "the world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places" (*A Farewell to Arms*). Bob was one of the many. He was broken by much in his early life but he grew strong in the broken places – which is why he was able to understand and embrace human brokenness and to work passionately to bring strength to the broken.

Continued page 6

FEATURES

He decided to enter the seminary, he claimed, because a classmate of his at school had said that he was going to the seminary. Bob thought that wasn't a bad idea, so off to Werribee he went. But there was surely more to it than that. There was the mysterious call of Jesus; but there was also the search for structure, stability and security, which marked Bob's life as a whole. It's why he thrived in the seminary; it's why he chose the priesthood; it's why he liked serving as a military chaplain; it's why he made a home in South Melbourne and was so reluctant to leave.

It may seem strange to say that the search for structure, stability and security marked the life of a man who was such a bold and free spirit. Yet Bob Maguire was a man of seeming contradictions. He was in some ways rebellious, yet in other ways he was quite conventional.

He seemed at times a troubler of the institutional Church and its hierarchy; yet Bob Maguire was very much a man of the Church, who was respectful towards bishops. There was a rebel in him, but he was a rebel within the Church: he never walked away. He was always the outsider who was, and needed to be, an insider.

Bob could be as amusing as anyone I've ever met. Yet there was at times an undertone of melancholy to his mirth, not unlike the clown with the painted smile behind which there lurks the pain. He certainly had a sense of the tragic in life, though in the end the humour prevailed, not as an escape from the tragic but as a way of surviving and even making sense of it. He was called the larrikin priest; yet he was a cultured man of high intelligence. His use of language could be powerfully poetic, epigrams from some deep place, but he also mastered the lingo of the streets. He was a lovable character who stirred great loyalty and affection, but he could be impossibly cantankerous. He was very sociable, but was also very solitary, a man who was close to people but in whom there were also great distances. That combination of closeness and distance is one of the reasons why social media had such an appeal for him in later life.

Bob was very much the showman at ease with the celebrity that came to him,

yet he was not naturally a self-promoter. He seemed at times a shy man with many protections to whom the limelight had come without him ever really seeking it.

Once he was there, however, he revelled in it, because it provided him with another kind of structure, stability and security – but also a platform for the Gospel which was always the fire in his belly, the Good News without borders. He was very much a man of the people, but he was no less a man of God. For Bob, the two were the same thing: the hungry, the homeless, the lost and the excluded were Jesus. In them God found him and he found God.

Bob Maguire never left Australia, despite the urgings of friends through the years. To those urging him to go overseas he replied unforgettably, "Why? I can be unhappy anywhere". That's true of course; but Freud it was who distinguished between ordinary unhappiness and neurotic misery, and Bob was never neurotically miserable.

If it's true that I can be unhappy anywhere, then so too is the opposite: I can be happy anywhere. And Bob was happy to stay close to home. Once he settled in South Melbourne, he didn't want to leave.

If he didn't travel far and wide, he did in another sense travel deep and wide – deep into the lives of people like myself and the lost and broken who were his best friends, and wide into the vast network of rich and poor, powerful and powerless, saint and sinner, which grew up around him through the years. For Bob became a brand, but he never sought just to sell the brand. At times perhaps the brand overtook the man, but in the end the man himself, the real human being, rose above and beyond the brand.

That's what enabled him to travel deep and wide into this society where he struck a powerful chord in surprising places. He was an Aussie original, who presented a face of religion that Australians recognise and respond to. He wasn't a wowser; he was always on the side of the battler; he was about action, not just words; he rolled up his sleeves and got stuff done; he was down to earth, had mud on his boots; he didn't judge or condemn; he wasn't tribal, but opened his door to all; and,

not least, he had an unrivalled and uncontrived sense of humour. Put that profile together, and you have the kind of religion that has a chance in this country. Put the opposite profile together, and you have the kind of religion that has no chance.

Bob favoured religion where faith and good works go hand in hand, the kind of religion described by Pope Francis, "I prefer a Church", the Pope says, "which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security" (*Evangelii Gaudium*). Bob could've written that.

In her poem *When Death Comes*, Mary Oliver has this:

When it's over, I want to say all my life I was a bride married to amazement.

I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.

When it's over, I don't want to wonder if I have made of my life something particular, and real...

I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.

Bob Maguire was a man married to amazement, which is why he was amazing. He took the world, the whole world, into his arms and made of his life something very particular and real. He didn't simply visit the world: he made a home in the world. He pitched his tent here unforgettably, and his tent grew larger and larger as more and more people came looking for shelter.

It will be those people above all, the ones he called the unloved and the unlovely, who will gather round God to welcome Bob home where all the suffering and sorrow will turn to joy for him and for them. That's our faith and our prayer, pure and simple, as we bid farewell to the traveller who sets out on his final journey into God with the words of Jesus ringing round him, "Come you blessed of my Father: inherit the kingdom prepared for you...for what you did to the least of these my brothers and sisters you did to me". Eternal rest give to Bob, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen. ☪

The First Synod: Procedure or Reforms

BILL UREN SJ

Bill, Scholar in residence Newman College, The University of Melbourne, wrote this article for *The Swag* in early May. Six weeks later, after the publication of the *Instrumentum Laboris* for the upcoming Synod, he penned the article which follows this one. Both articles were printed in *Eureka Street*, the first slightly edited, and we thank the author and *Eureka Street* for permission to republish both articles.

Any expectation – or, even, hope – that the Vatican Curia would engage positively and constructively with the agenda for the upcoming two sessions of the Synod on Synodality suffered a body blow in a recent response.

One of the reforms that, in preparation for the Synod, the recent regional and continental meetings had suggested was that the laity would have a voice in the deliberations leading up to the appointment of parish priests and diocesan bishops and archbishops. The actual appointments would ultimately remain with the respective authorities – bishops in the case of parish priests, and the Apostolic See in the case of bishops and archbishops. In the preliminary stages, however, when candidates are canvassed and reviewed, the suggestion was that structures would be set in place to facilitate the engagement of the laity in these processes, not merely *ex gratia* but of right.

The German Church, subsequent to its Synodal Way sessions, was leading the way in this reform. There are currently two episcopal vacancies in Germany, in the dioceses of Osnabruck and Paderborn. In Osnabruck a panel of nine lay members had been added to a panel of nine clergy to draft a list of candidates for the vacant episcopal see. A similar process was projected for the diocese of Paderborn, both clergy and laity being involved in the preliminaries for the selection and appointment of a new bishop. In both cases this integration of clergy and laity in the selection process was a reform recommended by the Synodal Way.

Alas! The Vatican intervened, outlawing lay participation in episcopal elections. Yet another setback for synodality, and an indication not only of the ongoing tension between the Vatican Curia and the German Church, but also of the forces within the Vatican that will continue to keep a tight lid on real synodal reforms.

What does synodality really amount to in practice if there is not a structure and a regulated process for the laity to have a voice in the selection of their clerical and episcopal leaders? Would such a panel as is projected in Osnabruck dramatically undermine hierarchical authority? It would at least in all probability limit the practice of “parachuting” bishops and archbishops into unsuspecting dioceses or transferring bishops from one diocese to another and thus making a mockery of the supposed quasi-sacramental bond between a bishop and his diocese.

This intervention of the Vatican in the Paderborn archdiocese is alarming. It reeks of the Curia’s authoritarianism which, we have been assured, is no longer a mark of its operations. To be sure, it is a relief that the Curia as such has no official standing in the upcoming Synod, although many of its apparatchiks will be present in virtue of their episcopal status. But the Synod is primarily a synod of bishops, to which recently Pope Francis has added 70 lay members (half of them women) with full voting rights – about one fifth of the full membership. However, as at the Second Vatican Council, one would be naïve to underestimate the influence of the Curia over the preparations for the Synod. There is, of course, a separate commission overseeing these preparations, but the resources of the Curia will no doubt be called upon. Again, as at Vatican II, some strong voices may be needed to deliver the Synod and its processes from the Curia’s tentacles.

The attitude of Pope Francis will be vital. He has spoken critically on a number of occasions of the synodal initiatives of the German Church and has lent his authority to the Vatican Curia in their attempts to moderate and even curtail the German Synodal Way. He seems to fear that the German Church is moving too fast and that their explicit reform agenda may endanger the whole theology of synodality. Synodality is for him

apparently, at least initially, a theology, a way of being Church, a procedure rather than a set of reforms. This initial expectation of synodality may seem to ignore, and even to be at odds with, many of the explicit recommendations and suggested reforms that have emerged from the recent regional and continental meetings in preparation for the Synod. But the Pope’s unwavering emphasis has been on the practice of discernment and on listening to the Holy Spirit rather than on specific reforms. It is only when we are assured that we are listening to the Spirit that we should be confident in embarking on reforms. After the Amazon Synod, for instance, the Pope did not move to implement reforms like ordaining married men or women deacons, even though both recommendations were carried with substantial majorities. He characterised these recommendations as resolutions of a parliament rather than listening to the Spirit.

Perhaps, then, at least at the initial session of the Synod in October 2023, it will be the procedure and process of synodality, “schooling the people of God to listen to the Spirit”, that will be the focus. Pope Francis sets the bar high – it will certainly not be merely a formality, not just a prayer or a scriptural meditation at the beginning before addressing the real agenda. The paradigm will be the meeting of the early Church related in the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 15, where the members deliberated on the legitimacy of admitting pagan converts to the Christian community without requiring them to submit to circumcision and other Jewish ritual practices.

The final decision was explicitly under the invocation of the Holy Spirit: “It has been decided by the Holy Spirit and by ourselves...”

Synodality will certainly be clergy and laity listening to one another – that will be an advance – but, above all, it will be listening to the Spirit. Only thus, to recall the distinction of the great Dominican theologian of the Second Vatican Council, Yves Congar, will we be able to distinguish “true” from “false” reform. ☩

Synodality: ‘Why did you doubt?’

BILL UREN SJ

This article was written six weeks after the previous one, when the *Instrumentum Laboris* for the Synod on Synodality was published.



In the immediate aftermath of the feeding of the 5000, Jesus went off to the mountains to pray. The apostles embarked on a boat to cross to the other side of the lake of Galilee. The sea was rough, and the night was windy. The going was tough. In the early hours of the morning Jesus approaches the apostles’ boat walking on the water.

The apostles are terrified, mistaking Jesus for a ghost. Jesus reassures them: ‘Courage, it is I. Do not be afraid.’ It is Peter, inevitably, who responds: ‘Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you over the water.’ One word from Jesus: ‘Come.’ Peter gets out of the boat and walks towards Jesus over the water.

Then, ‘seeing the strength of the wind’, he doubts – and immediately begins to sink. ‘Lord, save me.’ Jesus stretches out his hand and draws him up: ‘Man of little faith, why did you doubt?’

I must confess that in the lead-up to the first session in October 2023 of the Synod on Synodality, I more than a little resembled Peter. Embarking on synodal waters, initially I was apprehensive.

Would anything substantial come of this Pope Francis’ initiative? But then, as we went through the stages of synodal consultation – parish, diocesan, national and continental – confidence grew, I walked on water. Then, however, doubts. Would the working document for the first session (*Instrumentum*

Laboris: II) be drowned in Roman caution and curial control?

Would the focus be exclusively on the process of synodality, and would the voices of renewal and reform that resonated through the various stages of synodal consultation be relegated to the second session in October 2024: the place of women in the Church, reforming and sharing governance, authority and responsibility, reaching out to the alienated, the marginalized, the disenfranchised, the divorced and remarried, the LGBTIQ+, investigating priestly celibacy and seminary training, addressing clericalism and hierarchicalism? Like Peter, I doubted. Was it sinking time?

But then, on June 20, came the text of *Instrumentum Laboris*. It was like Jesus stretching out his hand to rescue Peter, the Holy Spirit reaching out to the people of God.

To be sure, the first half of the 60-page document is devoted to elucidating what is expected of the synodal interchange and encounter: the preliminaries of prayer and reflection in preparation for the Synod; humble listening to one another and the Holy Spirit; freedom and fearlessness (*parrhesia*) in expressing one’s views; listening once again; only then dialogue and interchange; accepting and respecting difference, discerning under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; reaching consensus.

All this certainly needed to be spelt out – it is the *modus operandi* of the synodal process. But the working document, IL, does not stop there.

The next thirty pages are devoted to addressing the abovementioned priorities that have emerged from the various levels of consultation that Church members have engaged in since 2021. But these are presented as questions for consideration not as a text to be edited.

Under the overarching themes of community, mission, and participation all the neuralgic concerns that have emerged with surprising unanimity from the national and continental consultations are proposed and dissected.

There is even a suggestion that Canon Law may need to be amended to reflect the effect of synodality invading the traditional territory of the hierarchy and clericalism.

Now, one should not expect that all these issues will be resolved at the first session of the Synod. But the fact that they are explicitly on the agenda of the *Instrumentum Laboris* is a step in the right direction. Whatever tentative and preliminary conclusions may be arrived at, they will need to be taken away and discerned over the twelve months leading up to the second session. This was the pattern at the Second Vatican Council. It led to significant reorientations (think ecumenism and religious liberty) and even reforms (think the liturgy).

The *Instrumentum Laboris* is, then, a surprisingly refreshing and engaging document. It does reflect what has been going on in parishes, dioceses and conferences over the past three years. There are no ‘ifs’ and ‘buts’, no beliefs or practices that are excluded a priori from the agenda.

It is the ‘open tent’, the image of the Church that emerged in the continental stage of the consultation. It may well set the stage for a succession of synods: ‘Women in the Church’, for instance.

We are walking on water again! ☞

Finally, a genuine agenda

JOHN CROTHERS

John is a retired priest from the Archdiocese of Sydney.

The Working Document for the October Synod on Synodality in Rome has recently been released. It's the agenda for the upcoming synod discussions, with participants being asked to reflect on a range of specific questions under the broad topic of "Communion, Participation, Mission."

One of the significant things about the document is the inclusion of a number of topics that would be regarded as controversial to say the least.

For decades Catholics here in Australia, and around the world, have been voicing their concerns about issues such as clericalism, exclusion of women from ministry, compulsory celibacy, and the exclusion of divorced and remarried people from Holy Communion. These issues have not seen the light of day in official Church communications. But this time it's different.

For example, the participants at the Synod will be asked to reflect on what forms of clericalism still persist in the Church, and how new ways can be found to overcome a "clerical mindset?"

They will also be asked to reflect on the question of "access to the Priesthood for married men" – in other words, optional celibacy in the Latin Rite.

Women's ministry is also on the agenda. There is a specific call for the question of "women's inclusion in the diaconate" to be considered.

Another question refers to a group of people who are excluded from receiving Holy Communion. Participants are asked to look for concrete steps to welcome 'those who feel excluded' from the Church, with a specific reference to "remarried divorcees." In the same question there is also reference to "LGBTQ+ people," and how they too might be made to feel more welcome.

One cannot help but note the contrast between the agenda for the Rome Synod and the agenda for the Australian Plenary Council. The same controversial issues were reflected in the Plenary Council submissions, but were not included in the agenda.

Any agenda is crucial in determining the content and nature of the discussion. The agenda can be formulated in a way that encompasses the range of opinions of the participants, or it can be formulated in a way that restricts the discussion within predetermined limits.

Thankfully the Rome Synod on Synodality has adopted an open and inclusive agenda. The concerns of Catholics around the world have been listened to. There was no attempt to shy away from the hard questions. In all probability the bishops who oversaw the formulation of the Synod Working Document would have had reservations about including issues that were in tension with current Church teaching as it opens up the possibility of change to that

teaching. But those same bishops recognised that this was an exercise in listening to the Spirit, and the Spirit was obviously talking.

Of course, it doesn't necessarily mean that change will come about. There may well be a consensus at the Synod to keep the status quo. But that's not the point. What is important is that the people who shared their thoughts and feelings through the submissions were heard, and their issues taken seriously. The agenda is genuine.

The significance of this action can hardly be overestimated. Rome has invited discussion on issues that are at variance with the Church's current position on these topics. This is synodality in action – clergy and laity walking together and listening to each other, even when their positions differ. We are now a synodal Church. It will be very difficult to go back to a model where the only things up for discussion are those that the bishops want to discuss.

So now that Rome has shown the way, it is up to the Australian bishops to take up the challenge. Synodality needs to become the norm for the way we operate as Church in Australia. In practice this will express itself in many ways, but there is one way in particular by which we will know that we are a synodal Church, and that is whenever Catholics gather to reflect on Church matters, in whatever capacity, the agenda that is set will be truly representative of all those present, and of all those they represent.

✠



It is up to each one of you to let the NCP National Office know when any of your contact details change.

Don't risk missing out on your copy of *The Swag* or other NCP news.

Thomas More and the “Voice”

FRANK BRENNAN SJ

Frank is Rector, Newman College, The University of Melbourne. This homily for the 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 25 June 2023, is a slightly edited version of the one printed in *Catholic Outlook*, Diocese of Parramatta. Here Frank declares “Regardless of the shortcomings of our Parliament and the imperfect wording of the amendment, I will be voting ‘Yes’, and I say that unequivocally.” We are grateful to Br Mark O’Connor FMS of *Catholic Outlook* for permission to reprint this homily.

On Thursday we celebrated the feast of Thomas More. Fifteen months before he was finally executed, More was summoned before four commissioners including Thomas Cromwell and asked to swear the oath. Ever the lawyer, More asked not only for a copy of the oath but also the Act of Succession. Having compared them, scrutinising the fine print, he declared:

‘My purpose is not to put any fault either in the Act or any man that made it, or in the oath or any man that swears it, nor to condemn the conscience of any other man. But as for myself, in good faith my conscience moves me in the matter, that though I will not deny to swear the succession, yet unto the oath that here is offered to me I cannot swear without the jeoparding of my soul to permanent damnation.’

For More, process, precision and conscience all mattered. Right process and precise words could reduce the risk of conflict and the need for perilous conscientious objection. He went on to say:

‘If you doubt that I do refuse the oath only for the grudge of my conscience, or any other fantasy, I am ready here to satisfy you by my oath. Which if you do not trust it, why should you be the better to give me any oath? And if you trust that I will herein swear true, then I trust of your goodness you will not move me to swear the oath you had offered me, perceiving that for me to swear it is against my conscience.’

Ultimately the time would come for More to speak his mind. As Jesus says in today’s gospel: ‘Fear no one. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.’

On Monday, the Parliament passed the

legislation necessary for the referendum on the Voice. And on the feast of Thomas More, the Parliament rounded out a week of nastiness and obfuscation in Question Time with a completely unreconciled debate about the Voice. It’s now up to each of us to decide how we should vote, how we will vote.

Had there been greater precision and better process from our elected leaders, each of us would undoubtedly have a much easier decision to make in October when deciding to vote yes or no. The abuse of parliamentary process, the imprecision of wording and the fudging of arguments have made the choice more difficult for many voters.

I was one Australian who was delighted that the new Albanese government was committed to doing something about constitutional recognition of Australia’s First Peoples. The issue has lingered too long. I had every sympathy for a new Labor Prime Minister committed to constitutional recognition of the Voice, seeking a circuit breaker after three Liberal Prime Ministers in a row had said ‘No’. I applauded Mr Albanese making a fresh start with his announcement at the Garma Festival in July 2022 when he announced three draft provisions for inclusion in the Constitution and a draft question for the referendum. He told us: ‘We can use this question – and the provisions – as the basis for further consultation. Not as a final decision but as the basis for dialogue, something to give the conversation shape and form. I ask all Australians of goodwill to engage on this.’ I was one who was very happy to step up and engage. I thought his proposed wording needed close attention.

To give the Prime Minister his due, he then chose 21 Indigenous leaders with whom he dealt closely in fine tuning the proposed wording. But he set up absolutely no process for the engagement of ‘all

Australians of goodwill’. He did nothing to bring the Coalition parties into the tent.

As an Australian of goodwill who was worried after three months of government dealing only with its selected advisers, I wrote to the Prime Minister very respectfully on 9 November 2022 saying: ‘As a non-Indigenous Australian with a long-time commitment to constitutional recognition, could I put two suggestions: (1) Now is the time to set up a parliamentary committee process allowing anyone and everyone to have their “say” on the proposed words of amendment to place in the Constitution; (2) Now is the time to return to formal bipartisan co-operation between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition so as to maximise the prospect of Coalition support for the referendum.’

No parliamentary committee process was set up until 4 April 2023 – after the Bill with the final wording had been introduced to Parliament. By that time, both the National Party and the Liberal Party had closed the door, committing themselves to a ‘No’ vote.

Senator Andrew Bragg, one of the key Liberals who is a strong supporter of the Voice and who participated in the parliamentary committee, rightly said, ‘The committee process we had was a joke. It did not provide a proper opportunity to improve the wording. I mean, the idea that this wording is perfect, I think, is intellectually insincere.’ Bragg then told Parliament:

‘I think it was a bad process, mainly because there was no effort put into trying to develop a set of words by the parliament. Rather, what was given to the committee was a government bill. We were asked to review a government bill in five weeks, which was a policy of the government.’ He said, ‘The idea that the way the Voice has been drafted in this bill is perfect is intellectually unsound.’

During this last week, the government has made vain, belated efforts to limit the scope of the new wording proposed for the Constitution, urging us all to read the Attorney General’s second

reading speech. The government knows that a minister's speech does nothing to impose limitations on the scope of broad language in a proposed constitutional change.

These last weeks when the wording was finally placed under light of day in the Parliament, the government could not afford to consider any change of wording because it wanted to keep faith with its 21 confidential advisers. For its part, the Opposition would not consider any amendments lest a change to the wording make a defeat of the proposal less likely. Our elected leaders have been playing roulette with the country's soul.

The confidential processes for determining the final language of the amendment and the government's intractable unwillingness to consider alternative wording during the parliamentary process placed extra lead in the 'Yes' saddle bags while at the same time providing much unnecessary ammunition to the 'No' camp.

The wording of the change to the

Australian Constitution is imperfect. It could have been improved with a more inclusive, more protracted parliamentary process. But Parliament has now completed its legislative task with last week's nasty debate which did little credit to either side of the political chamber.

We the people now have a clear choice in October. We can vote 'No' to a constitutionally enshrined Voice – either because we continue to think that all constitutional entitlements should be held in common with all other Australians or because we are not convinced that the Voice will work effectively.

Or we can vote 'Yes' because, whatever the imperfections of the wording and the risk of future complications, we think it is high time that Australia's First Peoples be recognised in the Constitution in a manner sought and approved by a broad cross-section of Indigenous leaders.

Regardless of the shortcomings of our Parliament and the imperfect wording

of the amendment, I will be voting 'Yes', and I say that unequivocally. For me, it's time to own and admit the imperfections, while still committing to 'Yes'.

We all need to do what we can to help our fellow citizens vote conscientiously. Many have already decided to vote 'Yes' regardless of any imperfections. Many have already decided to vote 'No' regardless of the compelling arguments put by many Indigenous leaders. But many are undecided.

Many of the undecided don't want slick slogans or adverse judgments on their character. They want reliable information and respect. Let's hope the country can still get to 'Yes' despite the failings in process and precision. By now, we should have been much closer to 'Yes' than we are. May the conscience of Thomas More inspire and sustain us on this next part of the journey which risks being as dreadful, dreary and divisive as was much of our parliament's carry-on this past week. ☺



The Voice – It's time for the Church to proclaim Yes!

SENSE OF THE FAITHFUL EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

The current members of the Sense of the Faithful Editorial Committee are Richard Curtain (Chair), Rowan Ireland, Gerry Lewis, Fr Gerry McKernan and Peter Sheehan. In 2019, a small group of parishes set up the Sense of the Faithful to facilitate discussion about key issues facing the Church, and to articulate a shared view among Catholics to the extent possible. Website: www.senseofthefaithful.com.au

During June 2023 the final legislation to establish a referendum for an Indigenous Voice will pass through the Federal Parliament. Australia now faces a pivotal moment in its history. If the Australian people agree to the request of the indigenous leaders gathered at Uluru in 2016 for a recognized voice, a new era of reconciliation and justice is possible. If it is rejected a wave of bitterness will sweep across the land, engulfing many sections of the community.

Now is the time for all Catholics, including the Bishops, to take a decisive stand on this moral challenge. We call on the Australian Catholic Bishops to put out a clear statement supporting a Yes vote and encouraging Catholics to

work to give our indigenous peoples this recognition and this Voice. Parishes should consider setting up a synodal process to pray, reflect, listen, discuss and discern on this matter.

As issue for all Catholics

It is urgent that all Australian Catholics consider how they will vote in the referendum later in the year, if they have not already done so. For some people this will be an easy decision, for others it will be a lot harder. This is a decision for an individual following his or her conscience, unconstrained by directives from the Church or anyone else. However, many Catholics look to their leaders for guidance on the moral dimensions of this decision, as do some other Australians.

It might be helpful to keep in mind the words of Pope John Paul II nearly forty years ago, in his powerful address to aboriginal Australians in Alice Springs on 29 November 1986:

'You are part of Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.'

The Bishops should provide a lead

Without issuing directives, it is urgent that the Australian Catholic Bishops now provide stronger moral leadership on the Voice to Parliament. Following the lead of the Plenary Council, the Bishop's Conference, in a statement issued on 11 May 2023, supported the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Continued page 12

Pastoral Transport



to keep the faith alive

One of the project areas of **Aid to the Church in Need** is **pastoral transport** to help priests, religious sisters and catechists to reach the faithful.

In 2022, ACN provided **1,253 pastoral vehicles**. This included 564 cars, 406 bicycles, 252 motorcycles, 16 boats, 11 buses, and 4 trucks for the pastoral work of the Church – particularly in Latin America and Africa.

ACN has many stories of the support that we have been able to provide by means of transport.

One example of our help was the purchase of 100 bicycles and five mopeds for the evangelization work and social initiatives of the Obra de Maria, Brazil.

In 2020 the Brazilian lay Association, the Obra de Maria Or “Mary’s Work” celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. It was a great occasion, with the participation of 68 bishops and 300 priests. The community today has around 3500 members, from all walks of life, including priests, deacons, consecrated religious, married and single lay people. They all form one great family, a community that is present in forty different countries around the world today.

In Brazil the members of the Association are active in 238 different parishes and 38 different dioceses. Thanks to the generosity of our benefactors, we have been able to supply 100 bicycles and five mopeds for the work of these young volunteers. Your help was greeted with great joy and gratitude in Brazil.

Can you help ACN support more project like this?



When you make an offering you can select to receive a rosary blessed by the Pope.

To make an offering scan the **QR code** or visit www.aidtochurch.org/transport2023



Aid to the Church in Need

ACN AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND

They emphasized the potential importance of the Voice, and encouraged all Australians to engage in serious and respectful debate about this key issue. However, they stopped short of providing serious moral guidance on the substantive issue.

In particular, their statement stops well short of the words of Pope Francis speaking about recognizing, listening to and making decisions concerning indigenous peoples, in paragraph 26 of *Querida Amazonia* he wrote:

‘we should do this in the first place with the [Indigenous peoples]. They are not just another party to be won over, or merely another individual seated at a table of equals. They are our principal dialogue partners, those from whom we have the most to learn, to whom we need to listen out of a duty of justice, and from whom we must ask permission before presenting our proposals. Their words, their hopes and their fears should be the most authoritative voice at any table of dialogue ... Otherwise, the result would be, once again, ‘a plan drawn up by the few for the few.’

In recent decades, Australian Governments of goodwill have not listened effectively to indigenous voices. As a result, we have had a series of plans for aboriginal welfare drawn up by the few for the few, with little success.

We call on the Australian Catholic Bishops to issue a clear expression of the moral implications of the referendum, supporting a Yes vote at the referendum. This could draw on recent statements by some of their key advisors.

For example, in late May 2023 the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) expressed its support for the Voice, in a statement issued on its website. NATSICC argued that the Voice would be a significant stride forward for indigenous peoples.

On 3 June 2023, Father Frank Brennan SJ, in a lecture delivered at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome (subsequently published in *Eureka Street*) declared that

“Regardless of the shortcomings of our Parliament, I will be voting ‘Yes’, and I say that unequivocally.”

Neither racially divisive or inappropriately political

Two issues might cause the Bishops concern in providing that advice. One is the fear that the Voice will highlight race in our Constitution. This is quite wrong: the Voice is not about race but about indigeneity. A Voice in the constitution will not set aboriginal people apart because they are a different race from the Europeans, the Chinese or the Indians, but because they are the original inhabitants of this land, from whom it was taken. The Voice seeks to recognize and learn from their long history in this land, and to help to address the many injustices arising from dispossession. It is not at all about ethnicity or race.

The second issue may be concern that the Church should not be involved in politics. In our view, recognition of the original Australians through a voice to Parliament is a moral issue, directed at righting past wrongs and building a more just society. It is not primarily a political issue, but of course has political dimensions. The Church cannot refrain from commenting on issues of justice because of these political dimensions. This is a position regularly and clearly put by Pope Francis in his writing on indigenous peoples and other matters.

Engagement at the parish level

For those parishioners who would like to engage fully in discernment, we suggest that Catholic parishes around Australia take a lead in offering a synodal process on this important concept on which Australians will in due course vote. This synodal practice was introduced to many parishes through the response to the Plenary Council and to the ongoing Synod of Bishops. It can be very moving experience, which allows people in small groups to listen, talk and pray about selected issues designated by the Parish.

We suggest that parishes offer a synodal process that asks parishioners to come together to pray, reflect, listen, discuss, and discern on these crucial issues of aboriginal recognition and the Indigenous Voice to Parliament. This powerful experience and process may help individuals come to a decision on how they will vote in the referendum later in the year. ☪

Where is change happening in the Australian Catholic Church?

RICHARD CURTAIN FOR THE SENSE OF THE FAITHFUL GROUP

Is the Catholic Church in Australia changing and if so, where are the changes taking place? Evidence of change is available from the Diocesan synthesis reports of the consultations for the Bishops' Synod in Rome in October 2023, supplemented by reviews of diocesan websites.

The following analysis is based on the ongoing efforts by the Sense of the Faithful group from Melbourne and beyond to assess the nature and extent of these changes taking place not only in Australia but also in other national Catholic churches. For more information about the group, see our website Sense of the Faithful.

The diocesan synthesis reports, which can be downloaded from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) website, were intended as summaries of the consultations conducted at the request of the Vatican for the Bishops Synod. However, many dioceses went further and offered a summary of the changes they (i.e., the bishop) were already making or planned to make in response to the issues raised. The diocesan websites also provide information on new initiatives such as setting up a diocesan pastoral council.

The results show that many bishops, especially for the regional dioceses, have decided to engage more with their parishioners, schools, and agencies. On the other hand, the largest archdioceses offer a more mixed picture, with some reports merely content to offer a summary of the consultations without saying what changes the archdiocese intends to make.

Profile of dioceses making changes

As many as 16 of the 28 geographically based dioceses have made references to changes in their diocesan synthesis reports. The dioceses that have made a range of commitments are Archdioceses of Brisbane and Sydney, and the dioceses of Ballarat, Cairns, Parramatta, Sale, Sandhurst, and Wilcannia-Forbes. Commitments to specific changes have been made by Archdioceses of Adelaide and most recently Perth (noting the April 2023 announcement of a Diocesan Assembly in July 2024), and the dioceses of Bunbury, Broken Bay, Darwin, Lismore, Port Pirie, Rockhampton and Wagga Wagga. Notably missing from the list are the Archdioceses of Canberra & Goulburn, Melbourne, and Hobart, and the dioceses of Armidale, Bathurst, Broome, Maitland Newcastle, Toowoomba, and Wollongong.

The synthesis for the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Australia's largest, offered a comprehensive summary of the submissions, but merely concluded with seven non-committal questions 'for further discernment for the Church going forward.' The final question reflects the tone of the other questions: 'how can we move beyond the talking points, slogans, and concern about governance, so that we do not lose "the fragrance of the Gospel?"

We are undertaking further analysis to provide more detail about the nature of the changes underway in dioceses. One key area of change is action on Laudato Si. The ACBC published on 5 June 2023, World Environment Day, its Laudato Si' Action Plan outlining practical responses that parishes and Church agencies can make to Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter. According to Microsoft's Bing Chat, the ACBC is the first episcopal conference in the world to develop such a plan. The bishops have asked Caritas Australia to support parishes and dioceses to implement plan. We will provide an assessment on our website by early August 2023 to show which dioceses have developed and are implementing their own plans as well as noting other recent changes agreed to. ☺



Free and fair societies: the Calvary Hospital acquisition!

TONY PERCY

The acquisition of the Canberra Calvary Hospital by the ACT Government created much concern and comment in recent months. We are grateful to Tony who has had much experience as Vicar General of the Canberra & Goulburn Archdiocese for penning this reflection for *The Swag*.

The ACT Government has made a compulsory acquisition of Calvary Public Hospital in Canberra. It took place on the 3 July 2023.

Naturally enough, the question arises, 'Who is next and in what jurisdiction?

Calvary was invited to come in 1979 by the Federal Government, with a 120-year lease. The ACT Government

suspended its own standing orders and suspended its own Land Acquisition Act, preferring to override these democratic processes with 'bulldozer legislation.' Thus, there was no consultation about the compulsory acquisition. It remains to be seen if 'just terms' will be satisfied. Remember the film *The Castle*.

Over 50,000 people have signed the 'Save Calvary' petition. No one predicted

this, and despite the loss, the numbers keep piling up. Two critical issues are at stake. The rule of law and religious freedom are foundational to free and fair societies.

Governments are subject to the rule of law, as are we. This is especially true of the right to private property, which is one of the best natural mechanisms we have of creating wealth and distributing it.

Yet, in this matter, the normal processes of law have been put aside – with the Prime Minister supporting.

Continued page 14

FEATURES

Can anyone imagine John Curtin, Ben Chifley, Bob Hawke, Paul Keating supporting such behaviour?

Former Liberal PM John Howard weighed in, supporting Catholic medical and educational institutions for the services they provide to the community.

Elected representatives are meant to represent every Australian, not their own political parties. The ACT Chief Minister and our Prime Minister have failed us. Calvary is a medical institution inspired by faith.

Section 116 of the Constitution of Australia defends the right to religious

liberty. Written by people who were not overtly religious, it says:

No official religion. No compulsion in religion. No restriction on religion. No religious discrimination.

How utterly brilliant.

The most important human right is the right to life. Then follows the right to religious liberty. This right allows people to search for the meaning of life, in and through communities.

Some will find meaning in religion. Others in various philosophies. Some will seek haven in atheism or perhaps agnosticism. The constitution respects

their search and their right to adherence.

Mr Barr is an atheist. He is respected and protected. Mr Albanese is a non-practising Catholic. He is respected and protected.

Ordinary Catholics are practising, but not perfect. Will they be respected and protected?

We may have lost round one, but the fight has just begun.

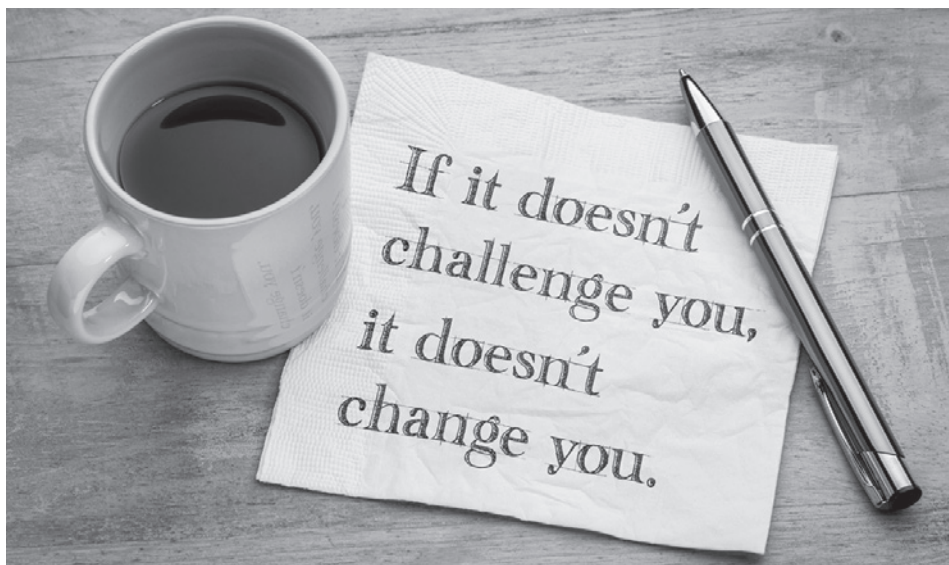
We need guarantees, now, that what has happened here in the ACT, will not be replicated around the country with other communal groups and institutions – religious or otherwise. July 2023. 🙏



Supervision for Catholic Clergy

BRIAN MOLONEY

Brian is Parish Priest of The Entrance NSW, Diocese of Broken Bay.



I have been a priest now coming up to 40 years this August. For most of that time, I have never undertaken professional supervision. I have always known that those on the “front line” such as the police have for a long time had this service available to them but that we as clergy were not encouraged or in most cases, we didn’t see the need to undertake this as part of our ministry.

On reflection I would say that I would often talk though issues with my priest friends and at times in my fraternity group but that is far as it went.

The Royal Commission into child abuse was a wake-up call for our society and for our church as we had paraded before us the failings of some of our fellow clergy in the media and with catholic clergy often being the butt of comedians’ jokes.

A positive outcome of all this was the recommendation that we clergy would agree to regularly undertake professional supervision. In my own diocese of Broken Bay, we were strongly urged to arrange this and were told that the parish would pay for this supervisor, and we

were provided with a list of possible supervisors for us to choose from.

I began this supervision in September 2022 via zoom on a Friday morning for one hour every two months. I didn’t really know what to expect and just started talking about what was happening in my life with my family, in the parish and in the church in general.

As time has gone by, I usually make out a short list about what to talk about. Sometimes this is obvious as there has been a difficult situation in the parish or an issue with my family such as the death of my mum who went to God last year.

I have found this a valuable and essential part of my ministry now as a priest in fine weather and when storms gather, and I believe that it is needed as we minister in the changing world of 2023 and beyond.

While I would not want to go through the pain of the Royal Commission again, I firmly believe that this insistence on clergy undertaking Pastoral Supervision on a regular basis has been a positive outcome for the church and for those of us who serve as clergy. 🙏

It couldn't hurt to talk with someone with a heartbeat – Professional Supervision

IAN MCGINNITY

Ian, a past NCP Chairman, is the current Parish Priest of the Catholic Parish of North Rocks in the Diocese of Parramatta.



In a recent ABC TV six-episode drama program *In Limbo* (worth watching on ABC iView), a character called Charles attempts to process the death of his best friend, Nate, due to depression. As well as leaving him to support his mate's grieving family, Charles is confronted with facing his own demons as well as the ghost of his dead friend haunting him. In the final episode Charles is advised by the ghost of his mate that he needs to be more vulnerable. Charles asks Nate the question, "Do you think I need to see a counsellor?" Nate replied: "It couldn't hurt to talk with someone with a heartbeat." Charles responds, "it just feels so hard." Nate replies "I know."

I must confess, in my early years of ministry as a priest, I would not have contemplated seeing a psychologist/ counsellor. I did see a spiritual director and sometimes this role overlaps with pastoral supervision, but not always. As a younger male, like the character Charles, we want to appear to be invulnerable. We priests can sometimes mistakenly believe that the gift of ordination provides all that is necessary to minister in a complex and ever-changing world both exteriorly and interiorly. To think that we are impervious to all the situations that surround us is a myth. I realise increasingly how critical it is to have a trusted, trained person to accompany us and assist us to face the reality of self and to process the wide

variety of experiences we have in our ministry and our natural human reactions to them.

As is often the case we sometimes do not realise this until we hit a critical moment in our lives. Whether it be falling in love, experiencing conflict with authority, being situated in a place or with a person we would rather not be, dealing with tragedy in others' lives, the recognition of our own mortality sometimes vicariously experienced in the death of others are just some of the situations where I have found it vital to share both my personal and professional life with a skilled and trusted person.

Sometimes it is not until we consciously reflect on what is going on inside us and around us that we recognise how unconsciously we have been carrying a weight or burden that needs to be shared and at times processed. Sometimes what we are experiencing brings up old wounds, and even early childhood relationships, which may subconsciously or inadvertently arise. We are very complex, human, beings. All formation, good and bad, is formative. What we do with these experiences and how we process them is critical for both our human development and ultimately our spiritual development.

Over the years it has been critical for me on a regular basis to share the issues that are going on in my life with a trusted and honest confidante. As with all truth telling, this has not always been easy because it means we sometimes have to face our flaws and mistakes, which can sometimes shatter our idealised self. This false image of self can often be perpetuated by the expectation of the people we minister to, and also a clerical culture that downplays our humanity. Even such words as "ontological difference" between us and mere mortals, can often lead to the denial of our human need to share what is going

on in our lives and how it influences our behaviour, attitudes, and actions.

Whilst the Royal Commission may have rightly insisted that clergy, like many other professionals, need regular pastoral supervision (and which many Dioceses have now mandated), the realisation of our humanity should help us to see this as a necessity, not an obligation.

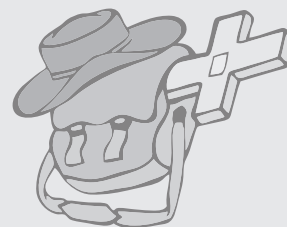
Just one further note, for many of us who live in a male dominated world, I have found that the perspective of a woman supervisor broadens my horizons. Whilst a pastoral supervisor or counsellor's gender is not critical, and numerous men and women are very capable in this area, for us celibates, it is an extra bonus! ☺

The Swag Winter Edition

Closing date for letters and articles is
Monday 16 October 2023.

Please email submissions for consideration to:
editor@theswag.org.au

Normal Articles: 700 words
Major Features: 1,400 words.



**NCP...
it's up to
ME!**

World, faith, church: the genius of *The Tablet*

JOHN TIDEY

John Tidey is a Melbourne journalist and author. This article is an edited version of a paper he presented at The Carmelite Library in Melbourne earlier this year.

What an appropriate question it was. A loyal reader wrote to *The Tablet* last year asking: ‘How can one magazine cover the Catholic Church, in its beautiful and maddening complexity, with such skill, such depth and such gorgeous prose and do so with such a modestly-sized staff? *The Tablet* is a minor miracle and a necessity for all thinking Catholics.’

The London based International Catholic Weekly is indeed a gem, admired and respected around the English-speaking world. After spending my working life in the newspaper industry I am well aware of the collapse of trust and confidence world-wide in much of the mainstream media. *The Tablet* is one of the media’s bright spots.

It was founded in 1840 and is the second oldest surviving weekly journal in the English language. [*The Spectator* appeared 12 years earlier] In its 183 years *The Tablet* has had several owners and a number of “near death” experiences. Its position on the major issues of the day has varied according to the stance of the editors, five of them Catholic converts. In fact, *The Tablet* has had just eleven editors and their legacy is the rich heritage of the publication we know today.

The first issue of *The Tablet* appeared on Saturday May 16, 1840, a decade before the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England. The editor and owner, Frederick Lucas, was a lawyer and a former Quaker and his new journal radical in politics but traditional in religion. It was Lucas who chose the name and at 6d a copy *The Tablet* was an expensive purchase. After a turbulent start the paper moved from London to Dublin but its second proprietor and editor John Wallis, also a lawyer and a convert, brought it back to London.

In 1868 *The Tablet* was purchased by the Rev Herbert Vaughan, just before the first Vatican Council which defined papal infallibility. Vaughan – later Cardinal Vaughan – was a fairly well-

to-do member of an old Catholic family. It would be nearly 70 years before the paper was in lay hands again. From 1884 – 1920 *The Tablet* was edited by John George Snead-Cox, by origin an English country gentleman, who is credited with raising *The Tablet* to the rank of a first-class periodical.

When Snead-Cox’s successor (James Milburn) died after less than three years in the chair Ernest Oldmeadow was named editor although G.K. Chesterton had been (briefly) considered. In a previous life Oldmeadow was a non-conformist minister in Nova Scotia. As editor of *The Tablet* he famously attacked the writer Evelyn Waugh, condemning his comic novel *Black Mischievous*. Waugh was a recent convert to Catholicism and Oldmeadow declared it ‘a disgrace to anyone professing the Catholic name.’ A galaxy of Catholic writers and intellectuals rushed to Waugh’s defence in *The Tablet* and elsewhere.

By 1936 *The Tablet* was back in lay hands; it was sold to a group headed by Douglas Woodruff and Tom Burns, both of whom subsequently edited it, Woodruff first. The distinguished (London) *Observer* journalist Patrick O’Donovan said of his old friend: ‘One thinks of him (Woodruff) as the great last survivor of the Belloc, Chesterton and Baring group of joyous and combative and confident Catholics who made being a Catholic for a time almost over-exciting and a matter for the sort of pride that goes to support football teams.’

The Tablet was redesigned and became less “churchy.” Leading Catholic writers, literary figures and historians appeared regularly, among them Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh, Hilaire Belloc, and Ronald Knox. In 1945 the first chapters of Waugh’s novel *Helena* were published in *The Tablet*. After they appeared Woodruff urged Waugh to continue, declaring: ‘Ronnie Knox says it is the only book he has ever read which gave

him the feeling of what upper class 3rd Century life was like.’

Greene’s contributions to *The Tablet* are preserved in an attractive volume *Articles of Faith: The collected Tablet journalism of Graham Greene*. His novel *Monsignor Quixote* developed from a short story he gave his friend Tom Burns for a Christmas edition of *The Tablet*. In 1989, not long before Greene died, John Cornwell interviewed him for *The Tablet* on his faith, doubts and beliefs. ‘What, in the final analysis, does your religion mean to you?’ he was asked. ‘It’s a mystery,’ Greene replied. ‘It’s a mystery which can’t be destroyed, even by the Church.’

Woodruff edited *The Tablet* for 31 years and the tone of the paper, and its politics, could be described as conservative (with a small “c”). By the 1950s *The Tablet* was flourishing as never before; and how remarkable is this? In 1951 the cover price increased for the first time since 1840 (sic). It jumped from 6d to 9d a copy! The Second Vatican Council was the great event of Woodruff’s final years as editor and he attended every session, filing regular reports and commentaries.

My introduction to *The Tablet* when I arrived in England in 1962 was through an organisation of Catholic journalists and writers called The Keys. I never met Woodruff but I did meet Tom Burns of whom it was said *The Tablet* was “the consuming passion” of his life; and journalists such as Patrick O’Donovan and Howard French, editor of *The Daily Sketch*. My recollection – at this considerable distance – is that The Keys met in a room at a pub called *The Cardinal*, near London’s Victoria Station and Westminster Cathedral. What a privilege I thought it was for a 22-year-old from the south side of Brisbane to be in such company.

Tom Burns became editor early in 1967 despite attempts by Woodruff to prevent the appointment. The two old friends fell out over the future direction of the paper but Burns prevailed. As John Wilkins, the man who would succeed Burns put it: ‘This was a springtime of the Church as renewal launched by the Second Vatican Council took effect and

Tom was in his element.’ Concerns that the new editor would change *The Tablet* radically turned out to be well founded.

In the last issue before Burns took over, *The Tablet* had published a leaked copy of the report of the commission that advised Pope Paul VI that the Church’s traditional ban on contraception could not be sustained. In 1968 Pope Paul set this conclusion aside and restated the traditional teaching against contraception. *The Tablet* respectfully disagreed in a powerful front page editorial entitled *Crisis in the Church*. Years later Burns would write: I suppose that never in the 150 years of the paper’s existence has an editor of *The Tablet* been presented with a problem of conscience and policy so grave as that which confronted me with the publication of *Humanae Vitae*, the Pope’s final word on birth control.

The Tablet was sold to Burns in 1971, its penultimate change of ownership before *The Tablet Trust* was established as a registered charity. It was an indication of the paper’s authority and respect – despite a worrying slide in circulation following the *Humanae Vitae* editorial – that Burns was able to assemble an outstanding group of trustees. The Trust was initially chaired by the Duke of Norfolk and included Sir John Hunt, the British Cabinet Secretary at the time, Graham Greene and the writer and economist Barbara Ward.

By the time Burns retired, at 76, the paper’s circulation was creeping up again but the outlook was not good. John Wilkins’ appointment as editor probably saved *The Tablet* from closure.

It was 1982 and not only did he turn the paper’s fortunes around but it was said that his ability to distinguish between news and Church PR made *The Tablet* essential reading, even in the Vatican. Wilkins was a convert to Catholicism, like four of his predecessors, the difference being that he was inspired by Vatican II. Catherine Pepinster who followed Wilkins had been a Fleet Street newspaper executive before her appointment in 2004 and was the first woman to edit *The Tablet*. During her 13 years as editor Pepinster, remarkably, was responsible for *The Tablet*’s coverage of three papacies: the death of John Paul II, the election of Benedict XVI and his surprise resignation and the election of Pope Francis.

For the past six years *The Tablet* has been edited, with flair and authority by Brendan Walsh. He brought an impressive set of publishing and communication skills to *The Tablet* and had been its Literary editor. Pope Francis once described the Church as “a house with open doors.” Walsh sees *The Tablet* in the same way: taking a lively interest in everything and everyone. To deliver this vision he has at his disposal a small tight knit team of about a dozen journalists including a full time Rome correspondent, Christopher Lamb. *The Tablet* correspondent in Australia is Mark Bowling, an author and former foreign correspondent.

Part of the genius of *The Tablet* – perhaps the most important part – is its ability to combine deep affection and attachment to the Church while maintaining demonstrable independence. Nowhere has this been more in evidence than in its coverage of the scandal of

sexual abuse of children. Readers coming to *The Tablet* for the first time might be surprised at the quality and extent of its arts and book pages, an illustration of Walsh’s view that Catholicism is a matter of the imagination, as much as of the intellect.

It helps that *The Tablet* is able to tap an outstanding stable of contributors, writers and reviewers: A.N. Wilson appears regularly. So do Mary Kenny, Paul Vallely, the Dominican Timothy Radcliffe and the Australian Jesuit Richard Leonard. The Director of the Vatican Observatory is a regular columnist. My own starting point each week is usually Jonathan Tulloch’s sublime nature column *Glimpses of Eden*. There are two pages devoted to readers’ letters and each week they demonstrate what a thoughtful and literate following *The Tablet* attracts.

In print and digital forms, it is a beacon of quality journalism examining the broad concerns-- spiritual, social, political and theological – of its international and ecumenical readership.

In 2017 *The Tablet* established a Development Fund which has seen gifts and pledges targeted to projects designed to strengthen and secure the paper’s future. One remarkable benefit is that a complete archive from 1840 is now available. The Fund is also supporting major investment in new digital products, outreach activities to schools and parishes and a young journalist’s intern scheme. Frederick Lucas would be pleased (probably surprised) to learn that after 183 years the future of his creation seems assured.

✍



The Swag Summer Edition

Closing date for letters and articles is
Monday 16 October 2023.

Please email submissions for consideration to:
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Normal Articles: 700 words
Major Features: 1,400 words.



A view from the pews

The author of this piece asks to remain anonymous as she hopes to continue involvement in reconfiguring the way we 'do' church.

There's an organisational management adage – 'Poor planning on your part, doesn't make it an emergency on mine'.

It's great advice. Planning helps prepare people to cope with change. It's why we have preparation protocols for natural disasters, and then communicate those protocols to those who could be affected. If the disasters don't eventuate, all that is wasted is some community time. If it does eventuate, then people have a much more nuanced view. Good preparation hasn't lessened the devastation flooding or bushfires can cause, but it has improved people's chances of coming through with lives and property intact. People are much more amenable to adaptations if they've been informed of issues, had options explained and given time to adjust. Or alternatively, you can prepare for a particular scenario, fail to communicate your thinking, and then be surprised by people's poor reactions.

Yesterday, I was among Mass-goers in south-east Melbourne given a letter from Melbourne Archbishop Peter Comensoli that effectively informed parishioners they were in the middle of an *emergency* [my word] that would require them to reconfigure the way they do church.

I am in one of the parishes that borders Bayside Catholic Mission (BCM) – a bringing together of several parishes in one hub. It seems that this hub is now to swallow (incorporate) several other parishes and then be split into three groups: north, central and south.

This letter doesn't explicitly explain why we need to do this, though all of us who have continued to attend Mass through Covid and the aftermath have seen congregations decrease, and it's been obvious for 30 years that the number of priests available to serve existing parishes has dwindled, with many of the current priests retired or nearing retirement age. So, you would have had to have your head buried in the sand if, as a member of a church community, you thought things were going to continue as they had.

Change therefore, is not the issue. It is how this change is being planned for and communicated that causes concern.

The letter says that on 16 May various pastors of the Bayside area were called to meet with the vicar general Joe Caddy and auxiliary bishop for the southern region Tony Ireland. 'It was a most cordial and productive night. There was a great willingness among all the priests to be open to the future, and to consider the best way of utilising the resources available.'

'From this gathering, there was an agreement in principle that the circumstances were right to consider reconfiguring of the parishes comprising the Bayside area... I hasten to say that no decisions have been made in this regard, but it is time to recognise the need to move on this soon, and to now invite your direct and considered engagement in discerning the optimal future arrangements.'

'I will now ask your pastors to open local conversations with you and your neighbouring communities to hear your thoughts on the future, and I will consult with the leadership of the archdiocese as we seek to walk together.'

The letter may say no decisions have been made but the archdiocese's current dealings with our priests and the implementation of the BCM two years ago give clear indications that 'consultation' means different things to the archdiocese and churchgoers.

Two years ago, Melbourne was still in the grip of various Covid lockdowns. Any widespread consultation would have been impossible. Anecdotally, the BCM implementation has been a disaster. Existing programs from thriving parishes fell into abeyance because there was little leadership in how to effect the change.

More recently, the priests asked to distribute yesterday's letter were given two hours on Friday morning to comment and suggest changes. This arrogance does not bode well for any consultation. Nor does it say much for

the archdiocese's duty of care to those in its employ.

I'm not adverse to more community focused parishes – prayer and family groups, sharing the Rosary, and membership of social justice groups such as St Vincent de Paul. Remote and rural communities long had to forge their Catholic identity without regular access to the Mass – perhaps a visiting priest every three months or so.

I would make a couple of observations, however. First, our archdioceses have a twofold duty – they are charged with the pastoral care of their pastors and parishioners, but also to wisely husband resources and prepare for the future.

Sudden change neglects the pastoral aspect, but more importantly archdioceses have failed in their duty to prepare for the future. As indicated earlier, no one should have been in any doubt that churches in Western nations have been facing a staffing crisis for decades. Where has been the planning to counter this? Where has been the nurturing of lay people in leadership roles and theology, the encouragement of deacons – male and female, faith formation, real and prolonged consultation?

In October the wider Church will have its Synod on Synodality. Pope Francis has made it clear that clericalism is an anathema to a successful Church. It seems that Pope Francis' words and wishes have yet to percolate down to this corner of the world. ☞

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Catholic Seminaries in Australia: 1835-2023

PETER J WILKINSON

PART 2: Early diocesan and other religious seminaries prior to the 1885 First Australasian Plenary Council

In 1842 Pope Gregory XVI established the Australian hierarchy with a single provincial structure to provide unity and common discipline across the entire Mission. He made Sydney the Metropolitan See with Hobart and Adelaide as suffragan dioceses. When the three bishops met for the 1st Provincial Council held in Sydney in 1844, they said nothing about seminaries.

Melbourne seminary

On his arrival in Melbourne in 1847, Bishop James Alipius Goold's priorities were to establish a seminary and a secondary school for boys. In 1849 he opened St Francis Seminary in a schoolhouse next to the church and St Francis School nearby to 'provide a full liberal education to advanced clerical and lay students.' Soon after, he was granted prime land in East Melbourne and a £2500 grant to establish a Catholic Diocesan Grammar School for boys.

St Patrick's College boarding school and seminary opened in 1855 with six seminarians and 53 lay scholars. It functioned well until 1858, when debts led to two closures. It reopened in 1862 as a day school only, with three seminarians residing at St Francis.

Hobart seminary

Bishop Willson established St Mary's Seminary in Hobart in 1854, to educate and train missionary priests for the colony. It continued until 1860, when debt forced its closure and its President, Fr Bond, took its ten seminarians – including nine Tasmanian-born – to Europe to continue their studies at Rome, England, and Ireland. Five were later ordained to the priesthood including 4 born in Tasmania.

South Australian seminary

In 1856 the Austrian Jesuits opened St Aloysius College at Sevenhill in the Clare Valley as a secondary boarding school for local and interstate boys. It also served as a novitiate and scholasticate for the Jesuits, and

as a seminary for secular seminarians, but closed in 1859.

When the 2nd Provincial Council met in Melbourne in 1862, 7 new dioceses had been established – Perth in 1845, Melbourne, Maitland, and Port Victoria in 1847, Brisbane in 1859, and Goulburn and Armidale in 1862 – but only four of the seven bishops turned up. Though insufficient for a canonical quorum, those present discussed in secret a proposal for a 'central ecclesiastical college (seminary) for the Australian Province', as well as an Australian College (seminary) in Rome. But as neither were considered urgent, no decisions were made. This meeting was never recognized as a council by the Holy See,

An Australian Priesthood

The most relevant questions at this time were: is the Church in Australia ready for a local priesthood and prepared to develop it and, are seminaries viable without Catholic boys' secondary schools? Across all dioceses in 1862 there were just 4 such schools.

In Melbourne, when Bishop Goold was struggling for quality staff, the Jesuit Superior in South Australia urged him to invite the Jesuits of the Irish Province to Melbourne. A rapid response followed, and in September 1865 two Irish Jesuit priests took up residence at St Patrick's College and reopened it in October 1865 with 30 students. In 1866 over 100 students were enrolled and, when more Jesuits arrived, Goold contracted them to 'train such Ecclesiastical students as his Lordship may entrust to their care'. The Jesuits saw their role as supporting the diocesan clergy and one priest was assigned specifically to form the seminarians at St Patrick's. But when he did not return from Ireland in 1867, Goold closed the seminary in 1869.

2nd Provincial Council in 1869

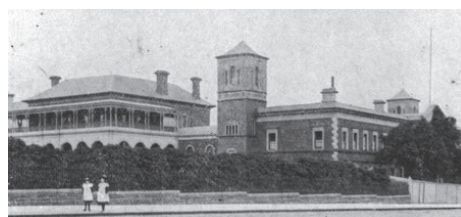
When the 2nd Provincial Council convened in Melbourne in 1869, the three seminaries which had opened in Melbourne (1849), Hobart (1853), and



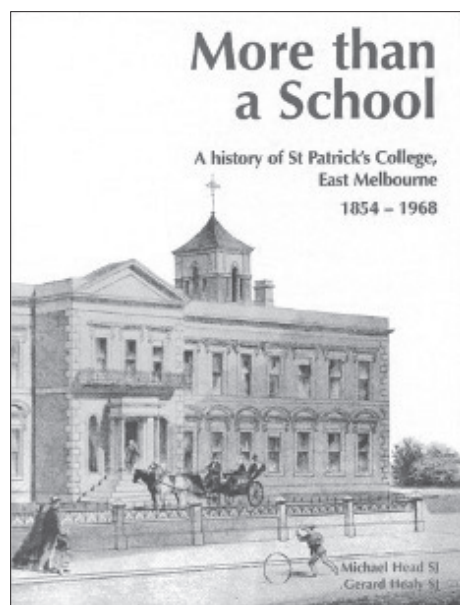
Bishop James Alipius Goold OSA



St Francis Seminary and School, Melbourne, c. 1854. (Photo dated 1924)



St Patrick's College, East Melbourne (circa 1900) adjacent to Bishop's House



Cover of book *More than a School: A History of St Patrick's College, East Melbourne 1854-1968*, Jesuit Publications, Richmond, VIC, 1999

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FEATURES

Sevenhill (1856), had all closed and the last 3 remaining seminarians at the Benedictine *Lyndhurst* seminary were about to be ordained.

At the Council, Archbishop Polding proposed a new ‘common or provincial seminary’ – but not as a priority – and Bishop Matthew Quinn wrote to Bishop Lanigan: “We have said nothing about seminaries, because we do not know what to say. Please suggest something.” The only suggestion, formulated after the Council by Quinn, was: “that a provincial seminary be established in Melbourne under the care and management of the Jesuit Fathers”. However, no action followed and the 1862 proposal for an Australian College in Rome was not even mentioned.

At this time the Irish bishops were content to have the Irish seminaries prepare all the priests they needed. When Dean John Kenny of Sydney rebuked them fiercely for having no interest in an Australian priesthood, other leading Irish clerics identified Catholicism with Irishism and campaigned strongly for more Irish priests to be recruited for the Australian dioceses.

In 1865 a new policy for Irish seminarians intending to work in Australia was introduced. It recommended commencing their formation in Ireland and completing it in Australia, so they could better understand the local context and develop closer relations with the Australian-born clergy. The policy was never implemented.

Hobart, Melbourne and Sevenhill seminaries re-opened

It was not until three years after the 1869 Council that the Australian Mission again had functioning seminaries.

In Hobart, Bishop Murphy revived St Mary’s Seminary in 1872 at the Bishop’s House with Fr Kelsh, a former alumnus, as Rector, but in 1873 moved it to the military barracks in Davey Street where it became more a ‘superior’ Catholic boys’ school. It is not clear when the seminary formally closed, but in 1886 Bishop Murphy announced his intention to open a new Seminary College in a former convict building at Port Arthur. It appears not to have gone ahead.

In 1882 Fr Daniel Beechinor reorganized Catholic education for boys in Launceston by establishing a two-section school: St Francis Xavier High School (also called a Seminary) and St Patrick’s Intermediate Seminary. There are no records of any students who progressed to the priesthood.

Bishop Goold reopened St Patrick’s College in Melbourne in 1875 with six seminarians but closed it permanently in 1879. The remaining seminarians were sent to Rome, Sevenhill, and St Charles in Bathurst. From 1849 to 1879, the St Francis and St Patrick’s seminaries had provided part or full formation for 22 priests.

In 1875 the Jesuits reopened St Aloysius in Sevenhill as a novitiate and secular seminary. They accepted two of the



St Patrick’s College, East Melbourne 1854-1968. St Patrick’s Cathedral spires in background.



St Aloysius Jesuit College, Sevenhill, SA. Image is of the former College buildings which now function as Sevenhill Wine Cellars (photo dated 2009)



Bishop’s House, 218 Macquarie Street, Hobart, site of St Mary’s Seminary from 1872-1873.



St Charles Borromeo Seminary (1867-1891) and St Stanislaus College, Bathurst

Priests ordained from Australia’s first Seminaries, 1835-1891

Seminaries	Years functioning	Priests Ordained	Australian-born
Bishop’s House, Woolloomooloo, NSW	1835-1837	2 ¹	0
St Mary’s Cathedral Seminary, Sydney	1838-1857	28	3
St Francis Seminary, Melbourne	1849-1854	3	0
St Mary’s Seminary, Hobart ²	1853-1860; 1872-73	14	4
St Patrick’s College & Seminary, East Melbourne	1855-62; 1875-79	19	5
St Aloysius College & Seminary, Sevenhill, SA	1856-59; 1875-85	26 ³	12 ⁴
St Mary’s College, Lyndhurst, Glebe, NSW	1858-1877	7	4
Marist Seminary, Clydesdale, NSW	1859-1869	0	0
St Killian’s College (minor seminary), Brisbane	1871-1905	4	2
St Charles Borromeo Seminary, Bathurst	1875 -1891	27	19
St Francis Xavier & St Patrick’s seminaries, Launceston	1882-1892	0	0
Jesuit Novitiate, Richmond/Kew/Greenwich NSW	1884-1934	0	0
Total priests ordained 1835-1891		130	49 ⁵

Notes: Many seminarians completed only part of their formation at a single seminary. They often studied at two or more seminaries during their 6-year formation, either in Australia or overseas. 1. Two others were ordained overseas and did not return to Australia. 2. Between 1842 and 1872 nine seminarians – 7 Irish and 2 English – arrived in Hobart with at least 6 already in major orders (5 deacons, 1 sub-deacon). Three were ordained to the priesthood in the year of their arrival while the others were ordained after 1-6 years of further formation. It may be assumed that all completed their preparation for the priesthood under the supervision of Bishops Willson or Murphy. 3. Ten were ordained as Jesuit priests. 4. At least 12 can be confirmed as born in Australia. 5. Four Australian-born ordinands from these early seminaries were appointed bishops of Australian dioceses: Joseph W Dwyer (Wagga), Patrick Vincent Dwyer (Maitland), John Henry Norton (Port Augusta), and Christopher Reynolds (Adelaide).

Melbourne seminarians. During its operation, St Aloysius prepared 16 seminarians for the secular priesthood including Fr Julian Tenison-Woods and, and 10 Jesuit priests including Donald MacKillop SJ, brother of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. When it was closed permanently in 1885 Adelaide Archbishop Christopher Reynolds planned to open a new diocesan seminary but died in 1893 before he could implement his plans.

Brisbane seminary

Bishop James Quinn established a minor seminary at St Killian’s College in 1871 to provide a ‘pre-seminary’ education for boys. In 1878 six seminarians were in formation, and by 1900 4 candidates had been partially prepared for the priesthood, including two born in Australia. The seminary closed sometime before 1905.

Bathurst seminary

Bishop Matthew Quinn opened St Charles Borromeo Seminary in Bathurst in 1875 with 12 seminarians recruited

from Ireland, hoping they would inspire ‘young Australians to come forward’. In 1881 it was moved to St Stanislaus College campus and in 1889, when the Vincentians took control, incorporated into St Stanislaus. From 1886 to 1889 St Charles was the sole functioning Australian diocesan major seminary.

During its 16 years of operation, St Charles formed 27 priests: 13 in full and 14 in part. The seminarians came from dioceses across Australia: Melbourne (1), Ballarat (3), Sale (1), Sandhurst (1), Bathurst (10), Maitland (2), Goulburn (2), Adelaide (2), and Brisbane (2). One graduate, Patrick Vincent Dwyer, became Australia’s first native-born bishop.

Religious congregation seminaries

In 1859 French Marist Bishop Bataillon opened a seminary at Clydesdale (near Blacktown NSW) to form young Pacific Islander men for the priesthood and religious life who would serve the Marist missions in Polynesia and Fiji. Student numbers peaked at 28 in 1864, but

not a single candidate was ordained. The seminary closed in 1869.

The Irish Jesuits opened St Ignatius Novitiate in Richmond VIC in 1884, moved it to Kew in 1886, and then to Greenwich NSW in 1890, where it remained until 1934.

Total ordinations

At the seminaries established prior to the 1st Australasian Plenary Council in 1885, a total of 130 candidates completed a part or all of their formation and were ordained.

Of these, at least 49 were born in Australia. ☺

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and because of you!**

Some ideas seeking an airing

DICK BUCHHORN

Dick was Parish Priest of Boggabilla in northern NSW when he wrote this paper in preparation for the National Council of Priests Conference, Sydney, May 1979, on the theme of: Priest, Ministry, Church. Dick died on 15 November 2022, and his obituary was in the Autumn edition of *The Swag* this year. This paper was discovered by Gai Smith of Redfern who is in charge of sorting out Dick's papers. See her letter to the editor in this edition. Much of what Dick wrote about is still relevant today.

Making sense of our goals in contemporary Australia

The Conference theme has been very much in my mind this year – hence this response to the invitation in the NCP Bulletin to have some ideas aired via papers to be distributed at the Conference.

This reflection process has been more or less forced on me by my return to the parish ministry after some six years in other activities – three years as State Chaplain to Y.C.W., and then three years as assistant secretary to the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. The experiences of the last six years provide a perspective which I hope will enable me to assess more objectively and frankly the reality of the Church within which I am to exercise a parish ministry, and to avoid the risk of being bound or limited by that reality. Anyone working within any institution must face up to such a risk.

There is an element of irony in describing my ambition as being to live as a Christian, in spite of being a Parish Priest.

I would describe myself as being of Vatican II vintage. I was in Rome for the election of Pope John XXIII, and the preparations for the Council. My early years as a priest were the years of the Council, and the hope of renewal it entailed.

Pope John XXIII gave Vatican II three goals: the renewal of the Church; the unity of Christians; openness to the world and the needs of humanity. The fleshing out of these goals in the various sessions and documents of the Council was challenging and exciting.

Bishop Donal Lamont, when he was here 1½ years ago, described the Council as the coming of a Springtime in the Church:

“The Church, the barque of Peter, was like a ship locked in the Arctic

ice: locked in, for hundreds of years, in the ice of legalism, formalism, institutionalism.

“In fact, it has been locked in for so long that many on board have got used to the situation, and forgotten that the ship was meant to be moving, that it was meant to sail.

“The Second Vatican Council was a sign of Spring. The Synods of Bishops since have been further signs.

“But Spring in the Arctic is a terrifying thing. The ice roars and growls as it breaks up, and giant lumps of ice and snow are thrown into the air. The ship shudders and creaks.

“Those who have forgotten that the ship is meant to be sailing are terrified; “This is the end!”

“But to those who listen to the voice of the Spirit, no! “This is the beginning! Now, at last, we are about to move!”

How has the process of renewal gone in Australia? Last year Monsignor James Madden, who as Rector of St. Patrick's College Manly had greatly influenced the formation of a generation of Priests, and who had been an advisor to the Australian Bishops during the Council, retired as Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Sydney. In an interview on that occasion, he said that “any differences between pre-Vatican II and post-Vatican II times are only superficial.”

If he was speaking about Australia, I think he is right: we have been successful in resisting the dangers – and possibilities – of the Springtime. We are, by and large, still locked in the ice. Just what progress have we made on the Vatican II goals set by Pope John XXIII?

Renewal of the Church

Vatican II strongly rejected the pyramid image of the Church – Pope, Bishops,

Priests, Religious, Laity – and gave primacy to the images of a People of God, a Pilgrim people, etc. – and only then drew distinctions of roles within that people. Clericalism was sentenced to death: unfortunately, it seems that the execution has still to be carried out in Australia.

Few clerics show any distress or curiosity over the evaporation of the efforts to form a National Council of the Laity. The bare figures on the numbers of Parish Councils, Diocesan Pastoral Councils – let alone a National Pastoral Council – are far from encouraging. And when one looks behind those bare figures to the reality of the existing Councils, few could use the documents of Vatican II to describe their priorities, activities and standing. In most cases, their subservient advisory role is emphasised implicitly or explicitly, and clerical authority barely dented. The differences in comparison with pre-Vatican II times are only superficial.

There are exceptions: Cardiff Parish was one such. The high degree of shared responsibility, involvement, openness contributed to the building of a vital Christian community across spectrums of age, occupation, etc. The Parish Council was a focal point in the work of building that community. The people thought of the parish as *theirs*, something they were responsible for – and not a fiefdom for allocation to any prince-priest.

The unity of Christians

Is there any substantial evidence that the Catholic Church in this country seriously desires, longs for, or is committed to the unity of all Christians in Australia? True, there have been some discussions, some token changes – but the differences are still superficial.

I recently asked a P.P. in a country parish whether, in planning an extensive parish building program, there had been any consultation with other Christian communities in the town as to their collective long-term needs. He looked at me as if I were a creature from another planet.

What prospects have committed Christians, partners of a mixed marriage,

of sharing worship and eucharist? How long are they going to be told that, officially, they will just have to “be patient!”

Some such marriages in the Cardiff area, and a number of ecumenically minded clergy, provided a base and an incentive for Church communities to face up to the scandal of disunity among Christians. There was dialogue, co-operation, sharing, understanding, acceptance and love. The desire for unity was real. The determination to work towards it, and the hope that it is attainable, were growing.

Openness to the world

The Pastoral Constitution, *The Church in the Modern World*, was not on the original agenda for Vatican II. It pledged the Church and Christians to make their own “the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted.” It paved the way for the Synodal document, *Justice in the World* (1971).

There have been some superficial differences in Catholic attitudes and actions in the areas of justice, development etc. Last year’s Social Justice Statement had a high rate of sale – almost 15 copies per 1,000 Catholics. Contributions to the Church’s development agency, Australian Catholic Relief, last year amounted to just over 1 cent per Catholic per week.

I feel that if someone with a “tabula rasa” was to look at poverty and oppression and their causes in the world today, and was to read *Justice in the World*, he would see it as a real attempt to come to grips with the issues of justice and development. But if such a person were then to spend a week observing the lives and activities of members of an average Australian parish, I fear he would be amazed to learn that that institution was connected with the document *Justice in the World*.

The needs of the Third World were very close to the Parishioners of Cardiff. They had an especially close relationship with the Tamil tea-plantation workers at Hapatule in Sri Lanka. This came about through the participation of a Sri Lankan nun in a Mission in Focus renewal program in the parish. Clothes and money were collected and despatched; questions were raised, and answers

sought: why are they poor? How did it come about? What are they trying to do about it? How can we help?

Parishioners travelling overseas stopped off to visit, and reported to the parish when they returned. Letters went back and forth. At Christmas Night Mass, St Nicholas came to collect from the children of Cardiff the presents they wanted him to take to the children of Hapatule – or the Aboriginal children of Redfern.

The Newcastle Morning Herald, in an editorial on 24th July, 1978, described what happened to Cardiff:

“Father Williams, who had been at Cardiff for 11 years and had, in his words, operated the parish “a bit differently” from others, was telephoned on July 1 by the Bishop of Maitland, the Most Rev. L. Clarke, and told that he had been transferred to Newcastle (effective the following week-end). According to people who were with Father Williams when the conversation was held, the transfer was made because Father Williams had allegedly given Communion to one or two churchgoers who were not Catholics. It must be strongly emphasised that, in fact, only two people, Father Williams and Bishop Clarke, and possibly only the Bishop, know the full reasons for the precipitate transfer, for which Father Williams had not applied and which he had neither expected nor wanted.

“The 11-member parish council sent a letter and a telegram to Bishop Clarke on July 3 asking him to reconsider his decision and to give an audience to discuss the transfer. When it failed to get an answer, the council called a parish meeting that was attended by more than 400 parishioners. The meeting gave the council a year’s mandate to pursue the matter with Bishop Clarke and the Pope about the manner in which Father Williams was notified of his transfer.

“The new parish priest, Father Fenton, dismissed the Parish Council on July 11 after it had refused to rescind its resolution to seek an audience with Bishop Clarke.”

Terry went to Newcastle. Although at one stage in his conversation with the Bishop he refused the transfer, the procedures laid down in *Ecclesiae Sanctae* and the Code were not adverted to, and he was prevailed upon to go.

The Dismissed Parish Council have still not seen the Bishop, who wrote one letter to them, refusing a meeting, and stating that there would be no further correspondence. When the typical clericalist prognosis of “They’re upset but they’ll get over it if they’re ignored” was not realised, they were urged to bow to authority, and re-join the mainstream.

The opening paragraph of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church describes it as a sign and sacrament of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind. I take this to mean that it is to be a light to people on how they can and should live together in brotherhood and love: how to organise themselves in society to live in harmony, respect, peace and justice; on how grievances – legitimate or not – can be dealt with; on how authority should be exercised, and the dignity and rights of all, even the least, are to be respected.

This is a noble ideal. More than superficial renewal is going to be necessary for the ideal to approach realisation;

As one returning to the Parish Ministry, the Cardiff affair brings a number of questions into sharp focus for me – and possibly for others.

In what direction should I work for the renewal of the parish? Which ‘mainstream’ should I try to lead it into – that of the universal Church, as evidenced by Vatican II, Synods, etc. – or the superficially disturbed backwater of the Australian Church? Would I in fact be doing a disservice to the Parish to strive for the former, if this is going to place it in a state of tension vis-à-vis the body of the Church in this country, and run the risk of exposing people to a crunch-type Cardiff situation, which would leave many disillusioned and alienated?

The tragedy of the Australian Church since Vatican II is that so many priests, religious and laity with great potential

Continued page 24

FEATURES

and willingness to carry forward the process of renewal have become disillusioned and alienated.

How many more waves of idealists will have to exhaust themselves pounding away at the ice before the Spring, which must eventually come, shakes us free?

Should their efforts be redirected? I suggest that a season has passed, and that we are now in for a long hard Winter. It is a time for gathering and protecting seeds and seedlings, nursing the rare pieces of smouldering flax, protecting bruised reeds from being crushed.

I would hope that the National Council of Priests would be one body refusing to accept the ice-bound state of the Australian Church as permanent; a body discontent with superficial renewal, open to reading the signs of the times, and acting upon them.

Dick Buchhorn PP Boggabilla 1978. ☞

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Catholic Australia and Catholic Ireland

FRANK O'SHEA

Frank is a retired teacher, who resides in Point Cook, Victoria.

It was a lovely little church, seating for about 150, grounds beautifully kept, serving the same rural community that I was part of when I made my first communion a lifetime ago. My father told me once that during the War of Independence of 1919-21, fighters from a wide area would come there for Sunday Mass – they would come early because some wanted confession first. The bishop had banned them from the sacraments and the local priest was ignoring his wishes. My father's two brothers were in the Flying Column and he was one of the teenagers whose job was to mind their guns and other trappings during Mass. 'What if the police came, Dad, or the Tans?' 'They never did, boy' was all he would say.

That was all 100 years ago and I recently learned that the priest in that parish of my childhood has been moved to a bigger parish some distance away.

So the church and the parish is without a priest, served now from a town some 25 twisty kilometres away. I read recently that only one priest was ordained in Ireland in 2022, that one large diocese has only one priest under the age of 50, another diocese is working on what they call a lay-led liturgy. This is Catholic Ireland today.

Now I move ahead to my large parish here in the untrendy west of Melbourne. Three churches, four primary schools and a large second-level school. As it happens, fear of traffic has necessitated that my Sunday worship is in a hall belonging to one of those schools. Chairs put out beforehand and taken down afterwards by loyal volunteers.

A parish priest and an assistant – what we used to call a curate – who do the Mass week about and are never late, lots of lay involvement in the liturgy.

Watching people come back from communion, it is almost rare to see a European – if such a term can be used, but you know what I mean – and you realise that the attendees are from Vietnam, India, Malaya, the Philippines

..., lots of countries for whom Christianity came as part of a story brought by non-military Europeans. Indeed, Australia would be part of that sample list and you are led to think what a wonderful job those original missionaries did. The children and grandchildren of those to whom they once preached the Christian message are now the backbone of our Australian church.

I can't help noticing every Sunday that although there are no kneelers, a number of these Asian worshippers take to their knees on the hard basketball floor during and after the consecration; their heads nod instinctively whenever the name of Jesus occurs in homily or ceremony. This is the kind of worship I remember from my youth.

And so we return to Ireland which was the original home of many of those early spreaders of the gospel. They left Mayo and Kerry and Wexford for Malaya and Ceylon and China and parts of Africa, often accompanied by teaching orders of nuns and brothers, spreading the story wherever they went. At home, we got *The Word* every week and *The Far East* every month and they contained stories and pictures of Irish mission work abroad; as far as we were concerned, Ireland was spreading the faith.

So it is sad now to read about what is happening to Catholicism in Ireland, the ageing priesthood that will soon disappear, the futile debates about calling on women to be allowed to fill fully the role of the absent males. Will Francis be the person to do it? ☞

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Using incense – some liturgical reminiscences

PAT FLANAGAN

Pat is a retired priest of the Diocese of Ballarat, currently living in Maryborough, Victoria.

My earliest memories of Incense were at Sunday evening Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; to which we were taken when we were kids. Occasionally, when I was a boarder at St Pat's College, Ballarat, Vic., we would have a Missa Cantata, and very specially, High Mass. Much incensing at High Mass. Now, incense is hardly ever used. In fact the only time most of us use incense is at the Commendation at the end of the Funeral Mass. We use incense to honour the body of the person lying in the coffin, and along with that we, perhaps, honour the Cross or the Easter Candle or both. I venture to suggest that incense is now under-used.

Sometimes I have heard even bishops, before they incense the coffin make reference to our prayers rising up to

heaven like incense. I don't think that incensing the coffin has that meaning at all. We are incensing to honour. Always, I think, that is how incensing should be understood.

One of the great priests of our Diocese of Ballarat, Fr Brendan Davey tried to counterbalance this neglect of the incense rites by incensing at the main parish Mass every Sunday. I said to him once, 'Buck, if you use incense on every possible occasion, how do you make the special days special?' He did not understand me.

So, to my own use of incense during my time as an active pastor.

I used incense throughout the celebration only at the Christmas Eve Mass and at the Vigil of Easter. At the Christmas celebration I went beyond what the rubrics specified, in that I first honoured

the Crib with incense. I have noticed that Pope Francis, at his Christmas Mass, makes a point of incensing the bambino. When I was using incense through the Mass, I also had the thurifer incense continually during the Doxology 'Through Him, with Him, in Him', the climax of the Eucharistic Prayer.

Apart from those occasions, I used incense during the Liturgy of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday Evening, but not during the Liturgy of the Word.

Because of the coming of the Magi with their gifts that included Frankincense, on the Feast of the Epiphany I incensed the crib at the start of Mass.

On the Feast of Pentecost, at the start of Mass, I incensed the Paschal Candle and the Cross. After the Pentecost Mass the Paschal Candle is moved from its place in the Sanctuary to the Baptistry.

And that's about it. I hope that what my *praxis* is will help you to think about your *praxis*. ☪



A Blessing for the new Financial Year

MICHAEL MCGIRR 2023

Let us give thanks for the real bottom line, the place where we think less of profit and loss, and more of gratitude and compassion.

The world is full of columns and numbers and spreadsheets and God knows we need to attend to such matters because injustice thrives in confusion, and power does not like to be made accountable.

But none of us works for a line in a ledger. We work to make the world more whole.

Jesus knew a lot about money. Thirty pieces of silver, one hundred denarii, the head of Caesar on a coin, the widow's mite, the workers who came late, the parable of the talents, the gold at his birth, the traders in the temple, the tax collector, the treasure in a field, the pearl of great price, the lots cast for his underwear, the rich young man who went away sad, the eye of a needle.

He built deep questions around such stories and images. What are we making of the world? Why? How will we grow? The questions 'Who am I?' is answered in another: 'Who is your neighbour?'

May we be hungry this year rather than greedy.

Hungry for kindness and encounter. Spendthrift of grace. Reckoned by love. ☪

(Michael asks us not to forget Caritas, for whom he now works.)

Cling to the rock

BY BR MARK O'CONNOR FMS, 6 APRIL 2023

The dramatic scene of Jesus' Agony in the Garden (Mark 14:32-52), is a rich source for our prayer and meditation.

Each person (and maybe even our Church at times) has to face their own 'Agony in the Garden' and there is never any clear-cut rational way through these trials.

Often the best one can do is to simply 'cling to the rock' like Jesus in Gethsemane and trust despite our emotional distress.

For it is in times of greatest humiliation that we come to real and true depth of soul. When we feel shame or powerlessness, or when we are being abused and cannot defend ourselves, we are certainly vulnerable to despair. But it is precisely through such humiliating times that we can grow deeper in compassion, graciousness and forgiveness, and not fall deeper into hate, anger and revenge.

According to eminent Dominican biblical scholar Jerome Murphy O'Connor, Mark the Evangelist, in his Gospel

account of the Agony in the Garden, is telling us that Jesus really and fully 'broke down', before the greatest crisis of his life.

After all, it is a human thing to have a mental breakdown if you are about to be tortured to death! This was no make-believe play-acting. Jesus was 'falling apart' emotionally.

Some Christians do not like the idea of Jesus having a mental breakdown, of Him being 'out of control'. But personally, I find it a great consolation.

Our faith as Christians challenges us to accept the human frailty of Jesus, as well as his divine nature.

It's natural that we all fear pain and the prospect of our own diminishment. We just do not want to think about it. None of us – unless we are masochists – welcomes suffering and death.

However, this acceptance of creaturehood, this coming to peace with our human finiteness and vulnerability, is such an important part of the ongoing Easter journey that we must all undertake.

In the face of the Paschal mystery, as it lives out in our own lives, the keywords are often to: 'let go'.

Let's ponder poet Mary Oliver's profound advice, as each of us struggles to gracefully navigate our own personal 'Agony in the Garden' – whatever that may be...

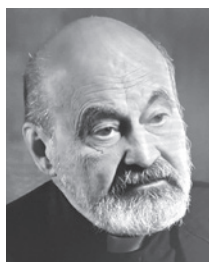
'To live in this world, you must be able to do three things: to love what is mortal; to hold it against your bones knowing your own life depends on it; and, when the time comes to let it go, to let it go.'

Br Mark O'Connor FMS is Vicar for Communications in the Diocese of Parramatta. This article was originally published in the 2023 Lent and Easter, Autumn edition of the 'Catholic Outlook Magazine'. ☪



Upcoming visit of Tomáš Halík

Br Mark O'Connor is arranging to bring to Australia next February, the famous Czech theologian, philosopher and sociologist, Tomáš Halík. His visit promises to be life-giving to all who will have the opportunity to hear him when he comes to both Sydney and Melbourne.



In August 2022, Czech Tomáš Halík, University parish priest and prominent theologian spoke to a large group of new bishops gathered for a course organised

by the Dicastery of Bishops. Halík noted in his Roman address, that all the severe 'diseases' of our time, not only infectious ones such as the coronavirus, but also social diseases such as terrorism and organized crime, are spreading rapidly in the global area.

Populism, nationalism, political extremism, and religious fundamentalism are also spreading wildly.

Halík argued that if the Church is to be a 'field hospital', it must provide for the people of God on the synodal journey home-based 'hospitals' dedicated to diagnosis, prevention, therapy, and rehabilitation. The Church's ongoing duty must include research and diagnosis of present conditions (reading and interpreting the "signs of the times") and creating systems of 'immunity' against sick ideologies, fake-news propaganda, and the infections of destructive emotions.

Halík interestingly stresses the importance of the formation of candidates for priestly and other pastoral ministries in the Church. Their focus should not only include primarily "parishioners" (traditional believers) or centre around the mission to expand the number of believers.

He recommends instead the further development of pastoral models based on the conviction that everyone's life has a "spiritual dimension", a search for meaning. Accompanying these seekers is just not possible from the position of "owners of the truth" as with the 'culture war' approach. Time and time again in Australia and the USA especially, that aggressive, legalistic and combative model, has been shown not to work with the majority of our contemporaries.

It leads people instead to become ideologues, not followers of the Christ of the Gospels. Halík insists that *Truth* is a book that none of us has yet finished reading.

Halík sees the Church as charged to seek the Risen One also beyond her institutional and mental boundaries, and thus to continually open and expand those boundaries. ☪

“Ramblings” of a retired teacher

Nearing my 90th year as a Catholic, I have become part of the dwindling cohort of men and women who were adult Catholics before, during and after the Second Vatican Council. But this reflection is not to grieve at the loss of a wonderful opportunity for Church renewal, nor to debate controversial issues with others better qualified. Like Mary in Luke’s Gospel, I keep many of those things in my heart alone with God. At my age, and with the probability of my faith soon being verified, I am done with contentious polemics, despite the challenges and satisfaction they have given me over the years. But intellectual curiosity remains.

From what I hear and read, St Augustine was a brilliant scholar who determined much Catholic teaching from his time to our own. In particular, his doctrine of Original Sin based upon a Biblical Adam and Eve solved theological problems for the Church of his day, and has lasted for centuries. Then came Darwin. A literal interpretation of the fall of man and their sin is no longer credible. The implications for traditional Church teachings are enormous – atonement theology applied to Jesus, Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, the necessity of Baptism, to take a few. If mankind evolved along the lines suggested by Darwin, and supported by scientific research, then where is the new Augustine in the Church to place these into our Faith perspective?

From what I know anecdotally the Second Vatican Council members looked at some of these issues and quickly dismissed them as too sensitive for open discussion, a bit as Contraception was. But some aspects about “sin” were examined. Eating meat on Fridays, for example, was no longer considered mortally sinful. Those of us who were identified as Catholic by a meatless Friday, and who cheerfully gave the Church power to send us to hell for all eternity for a meat pie wrongfully consumed, were not much concerned. We had always eaten fish on that forbidden day.

Other matters about sin were discussed briefly but dropped. Sin as a general move away from God was discarded to keep the traditional “shopping list” of individual sins for Confession.

The Third Rite of Reconciliation, immensely popular with congregations, was forbidden after a time for reasons still incomprehensible to me. And now, it seems, only a few have returned to a traditional Sacrament of confession. Perhaps married Catholics of fertile age have embraced “primacy of conscience” as a solution to their dilemmas of Church teaching on The Pill, and have restructured their notions on what constitutes sin for them.

Then as distinct from Original Sin there was Personal Sin as defined by the Ten Commandments. The saying goes, “God gave Moses ten commandments, Jesus reduced them to two, and the Church through the Code of Canon Law, added another three thousand”. But were the ten commandments solely of Divine origin or were they simply commonsense rules that evolving humankind needed for co-operative living? Scholars point to the Code of Hammurabi which predated Moses by centuries and which followed much the same code as his, with one difference. Hammurabi used brutal force to see that his code was obeyed, Moses relied upon religion. Some bishops at the Council allegedly argued that the Church should not act “ultra vires” in making up rules that did not come from God, especially those that threaten an eternal hell fire for disobedience. From this argument, for example, the relaxation of the Church law that made meat eaten on a Friday eternally damning was accepted. It made sense.

What does all this mean for our Church here and now? The council was not into negative anathemas. Catholics were urged positively to open up the windows of the Church and bring the good news of the Gospel to the world. It seems to me that we have come to be excessively introverted, almost narcissistic, in our preoccupation with what could be seen as less important. Is the most pressing theological issue of our time, for instance, obligatory attendance at Sunday Mass? Or should more time be spent finding out our relationship with God if Adam and Eve were metaphor not fact. Perhaps Jesus became human so that humans could become more Divine? That matters most.

Brian Monro, Marion, SA

The Benedictine dream

Dr Peter Wilkinson’s feature article about the history of Australian seminaries in *The Swag* (Winter 2023 edition) highlighted reasons for the failure of Archbishop Polding’s Benedictine dream. May I suggest the recalcitrant behaviour of Fr John Joseph Therry (1789-1864) also contributed. Therry was an ardent Irish republican and his dream for the Catholic Church in colonial NSW did not encapsulate the Benedictines. During his short seminary training at St Patrick’s College Carlow, Therry had been much imbued with republicanism and anti-English sentiment from his main lecturer, Bishop James Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin, known as JKL.

In an early will of 1833 – Therry would make more than twenty wills and codicils – he made his intentions clear by allocating funds for the Irish Jesuit Fathers to establish themselves in Sydney. Therry’s proposal for religious and lay seminaries on his extensive Pittwater site (now the suburb of Avalon, NSW) – and adjoining Therry’s unsuccessful coal mine venture – unsettled Polding. Without Polding’s knowledge, Therry sought to recruit Irish religious orders to come to Australia. Finally, in his 1857 will, Therry, took away Polding’s executorship, and allocated most of his extensive estate to the Irish Jesuit Fathers, which created an enormous windfall for the Jesuits to come to NSW and establish foundations such as Riverview College, Sydney. This act removed Polding’s long cherished financial pipeline. The Jesuits also outmanoeuvred Polding in relation to land at Avalon and St Ann’s Enfield West that Therry had intended for the Archdiocese of Sydney.

At the time of his death at St Augustine’s Presbytery, Balmain in 1864, Therry was a very wealthy man. He has secured this wealth via extensive pastoral holdings, benevolence from his loyal publican supporters, and through being the executor of dozens of estates of wealthy Irish emancipists. Much of the land granted by colonial authorities to Therry – intended for the Roman Catholic Church – was personally held in Therry’s name and treated as such. It is a mark of Polding’s poor leadership that he could

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

not secure the transfer of those lands in the 1840s when Therry was vicar general in Van Diemen's Land. As the principal executor of large estates of former 1798 Irish revolutionaries, Therry had unrivalled control over land and assets. Time and time again, families, parish priests and bishops wrote to Therry expressing concern at his refusal to transfer inheritances intended for poor relatives in Ireland. In one case, a family waited more than 40 years before Therry paid their legal inheritance.

Finally, in the stakes between Polding and Therry, the latter had strong pockets of popularity across Sydney, Campbelltown, Windsor, and in the southern missions of Appin, Bungonia, and Goulburn. But Irish-Australians did not universally love Therry, due to his unethical business arrangements, his use of the discredited Irish practice of altar denunciation, and his refusal to give the sacrament of the last rites to people living in marriages that the church did not consider valid. While privately Polding and his equally inexperienced vicar general, William Ullathorne, held serious concerns about Therry, they failed to capitalise on Therry's unpopularity and neither had the courage to publicly confront Therry, who remained a priest of the Diocese of Cork until his death. The sheer might of Irish Catholic colonial dynasties such as the O'Sullivans, Dwyers, Byrnes, and Murphys, may have acted as a deterrent to Polding.

When a legal dispute over Therry's will erupted between Therry's unmarried sister, Jane Ann, and the Jesuits, the Archdiocese of Sydney failed to capitalise on the situation. It is ironic that Jane Ann and her unmarried brother, James Therry, still bequeathed their not inconsiderable estates to the Jesuits in the mid-1870s.

Polding's accusation that Therry wanted to be a martyr may well have merit, but it inspired Therry to greater non-compliance, given that Fr William Tirry [sic] had been a martyr in Cork. Even after he had taken the temperance pledge in the mid-1830s, Therry's loyalty to clerical colleagues was meagre. Canonically and theologically, Polding outranked Therry, but politically, Therry helped to kill off any chance of a sustainable Benedictine community in

Sydney. On this and others issues, Therry was an unreconstructed recalcitrant.

Dr Damian Gleeson (*Australian Religious History Fellow, State Library of New South Wales*), *Crookwell, NSW*

Dick Buchhorn RIP

If all you know about Fr Dick Buchhorn is what was published in the Autumn 2023 edition of *The Swag*, I reckon you'll be thinking he was a good man. I met him when he lived in Redfern in the early 1970s, and received a last email from him in October 2015. He was a good man. Dick was Parish Priest of Boggabilla until the end of 1982, and left the priesthood in 1983. He died, as you know, in November 2022.

I have been lucky enough to sort and organize a portion of Dick's copious papers – letters, newspaper cuttings, a lot of documents from his work with the Y.C.W and the C.C.J.P. and all the issues that he was involved in, especially his advocacy for Aboriginal people. I have very much enjoyed this work, but it has made me “homesick” for the Church of the 70s, when it seemed that the hopes fostered by Vatican II could lead to real renewal.

I've come across a paper written by Dick, I suppose in 1978, titled “Ideas seeking an Airing”. I have re-typed it from the stencilled foolscap sized copy that is in his papers. Dick's paper touched me deeply, and sadly still seems to be very relevant today. *The Swag*, doesn't have a “Blast from the Past” section, but I wondered if you might give an airing at last to all or part of Dick's paper?

Gabrielle (Gai) Smith, *Redfern NSW*

(We have published Dick's paper in this edition of *The Swag*, Editor.)

A better Breviary?

In a recent issue of *The Swag*, about the time Peter Maher left us for heaven, Ed Campion had a letter complaining about some of the second readings in the Office of Readings in the Breviary. He proposed that the Breviary be re-issued, with better second readings.

I understand that ICEL has, for some time been working on its own translation of the Breviary. Presently

Anglophones have two translations, one produced in the UK, the other in the USA. Most of us priests use the UK translation, for the simple reason that it became available first. I must say that I myself am generally quite content to keep using this translation. Sometimes its language is not inclusive; but we fix it up as we go along.

Buying a new translation would be horribly expensive, and I will continue using what I have. Besides, who would decide which second readings to replace?

I think it would be better for ICEL, or whoever, to produce a volume of supplementary readings for the great seasons and feasts and for ordinary time, for use ad libitum.

Fr Patrick J Flanagan,
Maryborough VIC

Clericalism and Laicism: Culture and Lifestyle

Good that the words “We are priests best when we are priests together” are included in the winter edition. Not sure whether they promote clericalism? If so, they point to the positive side of being clerical. As a country priest I have greatly appreciated the encouragement and support of fellow priests at things like Monday golf or fishing; at deanery meetings when they are as I think they should be and especially in life/faith sharing support groups such as “Jesus Caritas”. My experience has been that the negative aspects of clericalism get knocked off in life experiences in scattered country parishes; and in being able to share with people on their farms and in their homes and in sharing/caring groups.

I was fortunate to experience Marriage Encounter (ME) in my early days as a priest. ME has the prophetic mission of priest and married couples supporting each other and working together to “Promote the value of Marriage and Holy Orders in the Church and the World.” Living both Sacraments involves living with love. Husbands and Wives do this in the first instance in their Sacrament of Love as two in one flesh! Priests do this for people they live and work with. Wives and husbands on ME Weekends share how their different personality styles and life

events bring disagreements, distancing, and disillusionment. I share how I have my ups and downs, differences and disillusionments with people I live and work with in Parish and community.

I am frequently surprised that what I share causes couples to thank me and to say how good it is to realise that priests are human too – with weaknesses, faults and failings, and they too, have down times as well as good times. They had put priests on a pedestal, above ordinary people. They go home intending to try to get to know their priests better, try to be more friendly and mutually supportive. ME does much to lessen the clericalism/laicism divide!

A married couple and I put together a Zoom presentation for the World Celebration of Families (June 2022) “Couples, Priest and Families Journeying Together in Life and Mission”. It was mostly about how we share life and work together in Marriage Encounter. A good example of Synodality in practice! Couples living their Sacrament are the best teachers and supporters of marriage and family. They have been sidelined for too long by our hierarchical church!

Pat Rooney, retired at Brunswick Junction WA.

Drip feed of Anti-Judaism

I have just read the article by Teresa Pirola, (“Drip feed” of anti-Judaism from Catholic pulpits has to stop) and was astounded by its negativity. I am 74, (Venetian) Italian, Roman Catholic, parish councillor, special minister, catechist, you name it. I have participated in the ministry of our Church, and still a practising one!

Never in my entire life have I ever felt or perceived what Teresa is going on about. I simply look at it as what happened in history! That’s it! History.

My husband and I have Jewish friends, and have never in our thoughts or conversations ever reflected what she condemns. We owe the Jews! It’s where our Faith comes from, through Jesus. In the homilies, in our Gospels, it’s historical fact, nothing else.

Please no more rubbish like this in *The Swag* again. There are enough crises in this world to deal with than this sort

of negative form. Love your articles, but this is beyond understanding. This is pure pot stirring indignation and anger.

Thank you once again for your magazine,

Pia Doyle, Australind, WA

Pope Francis on universities

Pope Francis’ recent advice to Catholic universities has a general application and deserves a wider circulation.

The Pope said that universities should be outward looking and preparing students to engage with the world’s problems. He added that universities should not teach rigid ideas, as we need minds, hearts and hands that are up to the challenge of reality, not the narrowness of ideologies.

These days fundamentalism is usually a road block to acceptance of the faith, and Pope Francis has stressed the need to present the Christian faith in a way that does not meet instant rejection in modern educated societies.

The Swag shows how to follow the Pope’s advice, and I appreciate the realism and sensitivity of its content.

James Moore, Kogarah NSW

The Pope’s Exorcist

I concur with Father Peter Malone MSC when he writes, “The Pope’s Exorcist” is not essential viewing” (see “The Pope’s Exorcist”, a review in *The Swag*, Winter Edition 2023).

He recommends “The Rite” with Anthony Hopkins. For myself, “the Exorcism of Emily Rose” with Tom Wilkinson has many lessons for would be priest/Exorcists.

This film asks the question: “should the Priest responsible for her soul be held accountable for her death or was an exorcism her only chance for survival?”.

Fr Moore (Tom Wilkinson), at the conclusion of his trial was found guilty of manslaughter by neglect causing death. He wished to be sentenced immediately. The woman judge spoke to him: “you know that you could face ten years’ imprisonment? The jury foreperson wished to make a statement – which was only by way of a recommendation. “We do not wish

that Fr Moore go to prison”. The judge accepted their recommendation and addressing Fr Moore said, “Fr Moore, you are free to go”.

In the 1980’s and 1990’s, I took part as priest in a number of murder trials. I did not appear as an expert witness not having medical training in psychiatry. I found that evil may have been present but that the prisoners often suffered from an abnormality of mind that would lessen their responsibility for their actions at the time of their crime. At no time did I see a need for an exorcism, although one prisoner asked me to get rid of the devil in him.

All I could do was pray with this teenage prisoner, the “Our Father”; “Deliver us from evil” – and that “the devil” was indeed “the demon drink”. His problem was alcohol and I invited him to join with other prisoners in the “Alcoholics Anonymous” group that I ran in the Chapel on a Saturday morning.

I saw him with a girlfriend after his six (6) year sentence. He thanked me for getting “rid of the devil”! He still attended Alcoholics Anonymous, both when in gaol and when he was free to live a life without alcohol and follow the 12 step program to maintain sobriety.

Finally, I refer to the memoirs of Father Gabriele Amorth “An Exorcist tells his Story”. He shows great courage and spiritual authority in his confrontation with evil. Pope Francis speaks openly about the devil, as did Pope John Paul II in the 1980’s. “In all of this the enemy’s defeat is a story of hope,” (see *The Tablet*, April 15, 2023, p 19).

Fr Peter Henry, Castle Hill, NSW

Art and the environment: It’s about who we are!

Is it about time we had a good hard look at our approach to Art and the classroom, school environment, and such surrounds, let alone pieces inside the worshipping walls.

Jenny Steiner, now located in Barkers Creek near Castlemaine, Victoria, is on a crusade to assist us all to have a rethink about ‘Art’ and our Faith. Recently her holistic approach received confirmation.

Continued page 30

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The holistic approach may be summarised as follows. You employ an architect. You may even employ a landscape architect. These firms are engaged to provide a Master plan for buildings and grounds. Why not employ a suitable Artist specialising in public art, to provide a master plan for all classrooms, playground spaces, and grounds, from the entrance gates to the worship area? Working with the Architect, and Landscape Architect, artworks are designed to integrate with the building and natural environment at different scales and budgets.

Recently, an encounter with a group of secondary students involved asking them to draw an image of Mary. The final results reflected the Lourdes Mary. Not one had offered “their” Mary. Continuing encounters began a process of development.

Jenny tries to discover the narrative behind the establishment, be it Parish,

school or other religious establishment. Each Religious Order she argues has its own particular narrative, allied to the charisma of that congregation. Why can't that be expounded and expressed in relation to the particular commission? The commission may lead to a deeper story than just the creation of another statue or crucifix.

So she proposes a Masterplan for Art, to be fulfilled over the coming years. It involves deep conversation with the key players. It attempts to identify key areas for artistic presence within landscape areas, including paths and sports fields, as well as in various rooms.

In recent years Jenny has sculpted a significant statue, (outdoors) for Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo, featuring bronze, glass and engraved names of the first students of the Numurkah catholic school, the first foundation of the Josephites in Victoria. Another significant achievement is at Parade

College, Bundoora, Victoria, where a series of statues tell the story of the original Team of Christian Brothers, led by Brother Ambrose Treacy, and ‘The Winds of Providence,’ into the new world, determined to bring the Good News despite the prevailing head winds.

Jenny envisages engagement with all the stakeholders from the students up, to discover the narrative, gain a commitment, and produce an inspiring story from all the information. Then stick to the contract and await the results.

The “new” world of social media, multimedia platforms, let alone the burgeoning AI challenge, demands we try harder to proclaim our Good News. We do have a Good Story. Jenny is offering new clothes in a new era.

Jenny Steiner is Principal Artist with *Art in Architecture* and can be contacted as follows: jenny@goodjoss.com.au

Frank Marriott, Bendigo VIC

NEWS

Diocesan Synods

The first diocesan synod in Australia was convened by Bishop James Quinn of Brisbane in 1863. An earlier synod in Perth in 1850 is contested. A further 132 synods, with clerics only attending, were held up to 1983 when canon law allowed the participation of lay men and women. Since 1983 just seven diocesan synods have been convened.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse recommended a national review of church governance. The resultant report, *The Light from the Southern Cross*, (2020) made two recommendations on diocesan synods:

- (i) that within five years following the closing session of the Plenary Council 2020-21 each diocese [should] conduct a diocesan synod and every ten years thereafter (Rec. 56); and
- (ii) that the membership of each diocesan synod [should] reflect the profile of the relevant diocese (Rec. 57).

The recent Australian Plenary Council affirmed (decree 7) that governance in the Catholic Church should be exercised in a synodal manner with the

appropriate participation of all the baptised. Since the close of the Plenary Council in July 2022 three dioceses have announced plans to convene a diocesan synod: Parramatta in October 2023, Brisbane in late 2023, and Geraldton in 2024.

Four other dioceses have already held diocesan assemblies to prepare for their synod: Adelaide, Sandhurst, Port Pirie and Brisbane. Parramatta is currently having Consultations from May-July and Perth is holding an Assembly in June.

The editorial in the June edition of *Catholics for Renewal* raised the ongoing issue of Diocesan Synods. A diocesan synod is a gathering of all the faithful of a local church working together on its mission and sharing in its life. It is a *liturgical* event: opening and closing with the Eucharist and beginning each day with prayer.

French ‘rebel bishop’ Jacques Gaillot dies aged 87

On 12 April this year, Jacques Gaillot, a tireless rebel bishop, died of cancer. He had been stripped of the Normandy diocese of Évreux in 1995 after thirteen

years. His progressive views were too progressive for the Vatican. He died one week before Fr Bob Maguire, the larrikin priest. Both were largely contemporaneous: Bob was 88, and the rebel bishop was 87.

Both shared similar views. A *Tablet* article (17 April) noted that Gaillot backed homosexuals, divorced and remarried Catholics, condom users afraid of Aids or “sidelined” people such as illegal immigrants.

At his farewell Mass in Évreux in 1995, attended by some 20,000 people, he said “This should be a Church of the marginalised, not a Church that marginalises.” If Pope Francis had been Pope at the time, he may have been made a cardinal!

Pope Francis met the rebel bishop in 2015, and urged him to keep up his activism for migrants and refugees.

Gaillot took over Évreux diocese in 1982. He was soon defending conscientious objectors, opposing nuclear weapons and supporting anti-apartheid activists. He tried to convince his brother bishops to decide that married men could be ordained priests.

Pope appoints hundreds to attend Synod on Synodality

Pope Francis has appointed more than 450 participants, including religious men and women and laypeople from around the world, to attend the Synod of Bishops on Synodality, with the first session this October.

The 10 Oceania non-bishop members appointed by Pope Francis are: Manuel Beazley, New Zealand; Dr Trudy Dantis, Australia; John Lochowiak, Australia; Fr Denis Nacorda, New Zealand; Kelly Paget, Australia; Sr Mary Angela Perez RSM, Pacific; Fr Sijeesh Pullenkunnel, Syro-Malabar Eparchy; Dr Susan Sela, Pacific; Grace Wrakia, Papua New Guinea/Solomon Islands; Professor Renee Kohler-Ryan, Australia.

Those members will join the following bishop members from Oceania, chosen by their episcopal conferences, who will participate in the Synod:

Australia: Bishop Shane Mackinlay; Archbishop Patrick O'Regan; New Zealand: Archbishop Paul Martin SM; Papua New Guinea/Solomon Islands: Bishop Dariusz Kaluza MSF; CEPAC (Pacific): Bishop Paul Donoghue SM.

Perth Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB, president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, will serve as one of nine delegated Synod presidents. Sydney Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP will participate in the Synod as a member of the Council of the Synod of Bishops.

Bishop Randazzo, as president of the FCBCO, will also attend the Synod sessions along with other presidents of continental episcopal conferences.

Five experts and facilitators have also been appointed from Oceania: Dr Sandie Cornish; Br Ian Cribb SJ; Adjunct Professor Susan Pascoe, who served on the Synod of Bishops' methodology commission; Fr Asaeli Raass SVD; and Fr Ormond Rush, who served on the Synod of Bishops' theological commission.

Pope Francis chooses 21 new cardinals

Pope Francis has once again caught everyone off guard by announcing his decision to hold a consistory on September 30 during which he will create 21 new cardinals.

After the September 30th ceremony – on the eve of the Synod of Bishops assembly – there will be 137 cardinal electors, including 53 Europeans, 24 Asians, 19 Africans, 17 North Americans, 16 South Americans, 5 Central Americans and 3 Oceanians. Of the current cardinals under the age of 80, a total of 97 will have been created by Francis, i.e. over 70%.

Since 2013 he has created 121 cardinals. Christopher Lamb, *The Tablet* correspondent, identifies three factors behind the Pope's choices: a need for a global church, an emphasis on pastoral men, and instincts about individuals. The Pope's global church does not have a red hat in that large continent called Australia.

Congratulations Bishop Ken Howell

On Tuesday, 11 July, 23 bishops and 140 clergy gathered in St Patrick's Cathedral with 800 civic and community leaders, parish delegates and inter-faith representatives to welcome Bishop Ken Howell as the seventh Bishop of Toowoomba.

The celebration was full of moments that link the diocese's past to the present and future. Bishop Robert McGuckin and Bishop William Morris (the fifth Bishop of Toowoomba), presented Bishop Howell with the crozier of the first bishop of Toowoomba, Bishop James Byrne.

During his homily, Bishop Howell acknowledged that the day's events heralded not only a new chapter for the diocese but a "continuation of a story that has been guided by the power and strength of the Holy Spirit".

"My first task is to get to know you and to do as Pope Francis urges us to do, to listen deeply to your story and to grow

in love of the people entrusted to my care," Bishop Howell said.

The housing crisis

Over the past year the RBA has lifted interest rates at a frightening rate causing incredible distress among so many with large mortgages. Rents have risen accordingly, and many of the poor of this land are on the brink of homelessness.

In Melbourne the bare winter branches in the leafy suburbs cannot hide the large homes behind that sit forlorn but snug. How many empty bedrooms are unoccupied every cold night?

Allan Drummond, who had a small piece in the last *Swag*, writes: "I remember living in the family home at the bottom end of Toorak in which all five bedrooms were occupied every night, as was the filled-in back veranda, while WW1 veteran Harry slept in the woodshed.

I slept on a sofa in the living room. I visited the house when it was for sale some years ago after renovation. There was no woodshed or back veranda. Auntie Lily's bedroom had been converted into an ensuite and a general bathroom, while Uncle Laurie's bedroom had become the dining room. What housing crisis?"

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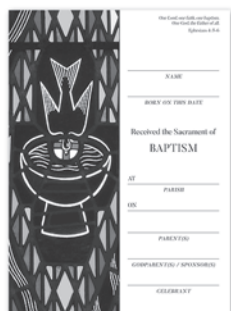


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Family Global Compact

REVIEW BY DR RENE POLS

The *Family Global Compact* produced by the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life was launched on 30 May 2023.

It comprises 53 pages and seeks to create “a compact” exhorting Catholic Tertiary Institutions to address the many issues that arise from *Amoris Laetitia* (AL) by posing four points for consideration: “the quality of family relationships; promoting the family – a social subject; social and political challenges; and a challenge for all”.

It is welcome and follows the “Global compact on education”¹ providing an agenda and leadership by Pope Francis as an implementation tool for humanity.

It reads like a report with goals and objectives, addressing researchers and educators.

Overall, it sets an agenda for Catholic academics to “rally around” and maximise their efforts to promote the teachings in AL; it is both necessary and important to defend and support the nuclear family. Much of the compact should be encouraged.

However, if all the effort of academia is directed to supporting the current position, crucial, “cutting edge, hard-nosed” work could simply be overlooked and even more ground will be lost to the avalanche of post-modern deconstruction of marriage, families and in the promotion of alternative models in social life.

The first section of this document is point one: “the quality of family relationships”. An impartial examination of the nature of “family” in our societies and through history is in order.

The definition of family and the measurement of its impacts and contribution to social capital and the common good need review. The compact assumes the virtue of the nuclear family as a given and this is a serious problem given the current context of debate.

The virtues of the strong nuclear family are clear: nuclear families are also places

where 90% of Child Sexual Abuse occurs; up to 1/3 of families are plagued by Domestic Violence and 15% at least, severe substance abuse. Families are harmed within war zones; the massive international migrations; those with cultural polygamy; regular prostitution or mistresses; the many women and men who are absent because of working arrangements or imprisonment; the history of “slave girls”, concubines and eunuchs and arranged marriages for the sake of culture, power or family businesses.

These are also issues for the institution of the family. Little is known about causal relationships between these harms and their effects for individuals and society when family membership is a modifier of harm.

The original scholarship required on the social capital contributed by “the family” to societies across the world, cultures and time is key. Much more is known about the personal benefits of the benefits that secure attachment brings to children and/or nuclear or extended family members.

Until such complex cutting edge, hard-nosed work is done, opinion dominated social media and poor research enables the flood of misinformation and half-truths to proliferate and this will only escalate.

It is important to respond to the message of AL but substantial work on the family, blended families, divorce and remarriage, also need to be done theologically, pastorally and in the social sciences.

Catholic tertiary institutions and academics should take on board this invitation and its limitations.

1. *Congregation for Catholic Education initiated this process in September 2019 and will be relaunched during World Youth Day 1-6 August 2023. It commits to 7 points of endeavour and is substantially based on Fratelli Tutti. <https://www.educationglobalcompact.org/en/global-compact-on-education/>; (accessed 12.7.2023).*

Letters to Maev: A Theologian and his Sister

By Gerald O'Collins SJ AC, Connor Court Publishing, Brisbane 2023.

Reviewed by Peter Matheson.

Australian born Fr Gerald O'Collins SJ spent more than three decades teaching theology at the Gregorian University in Rome, many of them as Dean of Theology. He is a well-known international figure in the world of academic theology. He is the author (or co-author) of over 70 publications. On page 95 of this publication he notes that Hans Kung once told him to write books, not articles. And he has certainly stayed true to that advice.

In this digital age, when small devices in our hands put us in immediate contact with friends around the world, the art of letter writing seems to be diminishing. This book revives something of the art. The author is mainly in Rome. The recipient largely in Papua New Guinea or Canberra. This slim volume of some 143 pages, plus another seven pages of an index of names mentioned throughout the book, is easy to read. As one could imagine with correspondence between siblings the names of many family members and friends crop up as they passed through Rome. But in addition the author drops names of High Court Judges, Governors, Prime Ministers, Counts, Professors, Ambassadors, Archbishops of Canterbury (and other places), and the Princes and Princesses of the Doria Pamphilj Roman aristocratic family. The name of Des O'Grady, the well-known Australian independent journalist, who spent most of his life in Rome, also appears frequently. We presume all these people were also known to Maev, his older sister.

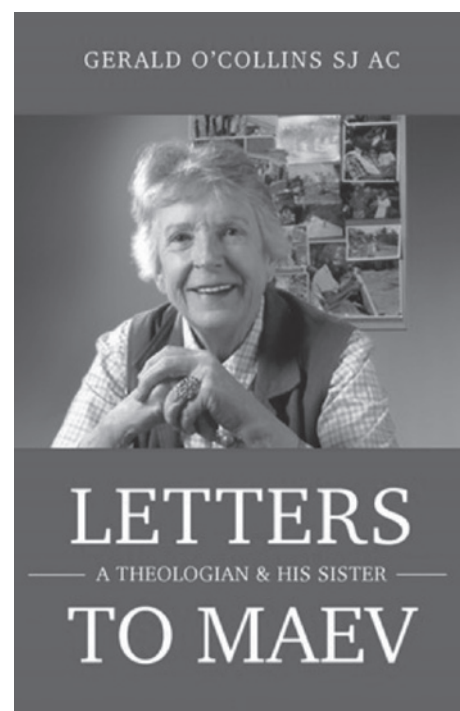
From the late 70's the author refers to some 69 letters written to his sister Maev of which some 57 form the body of this work. Many letters refer to the visits to Rome of various family members. Other letters constitute a travelogue revealing all the working trips undertaken by the author during the Gregorian summer recesses to the USA, India, Latin America, and Australia. There were other shorter trips to places like Tubingen, Nuremberg, Prague, Cambridge and Malta. And

some very short trips to the Castelli Hills for retreats, and silence.

A disappointment in the book is the absence of Maev's correspondence to her brother. There is only one, a fax sent from Canberra in June 1984, sending birthday wishes and telling of taking the Premier of Manus Province in Papua New Guinea out to dinner. I'm sure Maev's interactions with leaders among the peoples and nations of the Pacific would have provided an interesting counter balance to her brother's European high ranking contacts and adventures.

The book contains a chronology of Maev's life and an appendix (written by her nephew Les Coleman) that indicates she was an extraordinary woman. Her initial career in Melbourne was with Catholic Family Services (later Catholic Family Welfare Bureau, and still later CatholicCare) organising, among other things, the adoptions of many children. She then won a scholarship to do doctoral studies in social welfare at Columbia University in New York, graduating in 1972. Soon after she founded the Department of Social Work at the University of Papua New Guinea, and in 1979 she became the Professor and Head of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at that University. She retired in 1989 and settled in Canberra as an Honorary Visiting Fellow of ANU. She was often to advise the Australian Government in matters relating to the peoples and nations of the Pacific. She was also a consultant to the United Nations. Maev died at her home in Canberra on 3 July 2021 just after her 92nd birthday.

The book is sub-titled "A Theologian and his Sister" and perhaps another disappointment is the lack of actual theological reflection in the book. Maybe friendly family gossip letters to one's sister is not the place for theology. In one letter (May 1999) the author writes of his support for Jacques Dupuis in his conflict with Cardinal Ratzinger and the "Holy Office." Perhaps it is in the final pages of the book where a



theology emerges. By way of an epilogue a final letter to Maev is penned a year after her death. It is a reflection on the family journey they shared for 90 years with many friends, family and learned colleagues, a journey that leads into the kingdom of a loving God. They had met in Canberra just before Christmas 2019 for a last time. Covid soon hit and closed everything down. The author's final words of that final letter refer to a silent mega-hug he received from his sister: "With apologies to St Thomas More, I never loved you more than when you hugged me last" (p 133).

St Anselm of Canterbury said that theology is faith seeking understanding. This book is a reminder that in family and in friends we find the source of much of our faith, our understanding, and our truth. This is a good book about two good people who have worked to make this world a better place for many. Hopefully, if correspondence from Maev can be discovered, there would be substance for a new edition. ☺

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When The Garamuts Beat – A Memoir of Fifty Years in Bougainville – Franz Miltrup SM

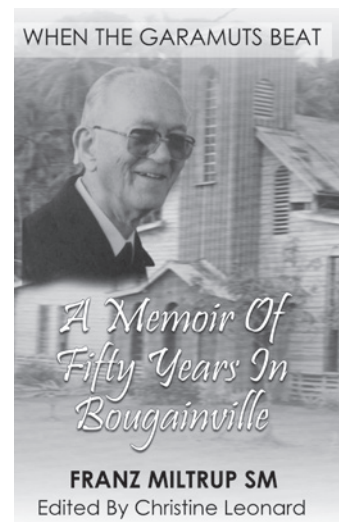
Reviewed by Harry Moore SM. Edited by Christine Leonard. Price: \$28 plus postage (\$10 within Australia). Orders: leonardstories01@gmail.com or via the website www.leonardstories.com

The first Catholic missionaries came to Bougainville in 1901. At first progress was painfully slow, as by 1910 with nine priests there were still only 450 Catholics.

In 1937 Fr Franz Miltrup fled Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party for the wilds of the Bougainville jungle. Five years

later he was a prisoner of the Japanese Imperial Forces. In 1989, Franz wrote his memoir in Papua New Guinea *Pisin*. In 2023 Christine Leonard edited and published it.

For any ex-missionaries from PNG and for students of Pacific history, *When The Garamuts Beat* is a must read. ☺



The New Boy

Film reviewed by Peter Malone MSC.

An intriguing film for our 2023 referendum and Voice year, colonial attitudes, First Nations people, religion and faith. As a realistic representation of Australian history, not so much. Writer-director, Warwick Thornton (Samson and Delilah, Sweet Country) references his own boyhood experience with the monks at Western Australia's, New Norcia, the architecture of the convent, the agricultural background, winter, olives. As a probing of the impact of missionaries (especially Catholics and nuns), quite an allegory to be explored – the lives of the indigenous people, especially focusing on the new boy of the title (about 11 years old, never named though the orphan boys initially called him Darkie, a wonderful screen presence by Aswan Reid). No explanation of his origins except the opening where he throttles a policeman, is taken into custody, in a bag, dumped at the convent at night. There are two indigenous characters at the convent, Sister Mum, the benign cook, and George, the taciturn handyman, (played by veterans Deborah Mailman and Wayne Blair).

Ordinary audiences may be bewildered and/or put off by the focus on Jesus, prayer, piety and devotion and, above all, the large new crucifix, the excited arrival, elevated in the chapel and the nails hammered in. (The final long-held

image of the film is the crucifix). But, for religious audiences, there is a fascination with how the new boy responds to the crucifix, identifying with Jesus, embracing, literally, the figure of Jesus, taking him down from the cross, tender towards him, removing the nails, the boy identifying with Jesus, even to wounded hands, becoming what we might call a Christ figure. Which highlights the challenge of the church and the Mission to the indigenous people and their embrace of Jesus in Christian practice and the meeting of Dreaming and lore and the Gospels.

This is embodied in Sister Eileen (and a worldwide audience wanting to see a Cate Blanchett film). Promotion refers to her as a “renegade nun”. Not really, quite misleading. She is definitely eccentric, deeply committed in her way, sometimes mentally disturbed, sometimes drinking, devoutly prayerful, the crucifix. She exercises power over the small group of under-12 orphan boys, (with a World War II setting) but combines orders and discipline with kindness. And the boys respond. As does the new boy though he is often bewildered (sleeping under the bed, mystified by spoons for porridge, not speaking except a few of his own words, but, ultimately, his word is a repeated Amen. And, mysteriously, he has the



power to create fire in his hand, a kind of numinous link. There is no priest, Sister Eileen taking over from Dom Peter, interpreting rules, performing baptisms, stole and chasuble, even the new boy, cleaning and dressing up, but the loss of his power of fire. She has set up her own church but relies on her piety. Cate Blanchett as usual, a tour de force presence. So, a 21st century perspective by a top filmmaker, provocative on colonial issues, on missionary issues, the consequences, but relying on traditions and art of Catholicism to evoke deeper social and spiritual responses. ☺

Returned to God

JOHN FRANCIS CHAMBERS

12/05/1938 – 05/05/2023

✠ John Chambers was born in North Adelaide, to Francis Chambers and Julia Fox. He grew up as an only child, though he was always insistent that he had a sister who lived for a few hours. His parents were publicans who moved about but the family finally settled in Kingswood, SA where John began his education at St Joseph's School. He later moved to the Christian Brother's College, Adelaide.

At the age of 12 he joined St Francis Xavier Seminary, Stradbroke Park where he completed his secondary education and his formation for the priesthood. On 1 July 1961 John was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Matthew Beovich in St Francis Xavier Cathedral Adelaide. One year after Ordination John founded the Catholic Deaf Association of the Archdiocese of Adelaide and for the next 60 years, he remained a passionate supporter of this community. In December 1967 John was appointed Diocesan Director of Vocations and also Chaplain to the YCW and Christian Life Communities. He was Assistant Priest at Edwardstown and the Cathedral Parish.

In 1974 he was Parish Priest of Glenelg, then Dulwich-Burnside and finally Kilburn, before illness forced him into an early retirement in 2003. In 2017 John entered Residential Care at Murray Mudge, Glenelg. He spent 4 years in this facility but after he had a fall, breaking his hip, he was transferred to a Southern Cross Care Facility at Bucklands Park in December 2022. There was a steady decline in his health and John died peacefully in his sleep at 4:00am on 5 May 2023. He is lovingly remembered by his cousins in Australia and Ireland.

The Catholic Deaf Community took an active part in the Funeral Mass which was celebrated at the Kingswood Parish where his journey to priesthood began. In the eulogy by Deacon Remo Patroni, John was described as gentle, faithful, generous and one of nature's finest gentlemen who had a great love and trust in God and shared that with all those he encountered.

AUSTIN COOPER OMI

14/01/1931 – 02/07/2023



Austin was born at Sorrento, Victoria and attended Assumption College, Kilmore before joining the Oblates in March 1950. He was sent to Kidalton Abbey, Piltown, Ireland to study and was ordained there on 16th September 1956.

On arrival back in Australia he worked in Brisbane while attending the University of Queensland (BA Hons in history), followed by Iona College in its second year.

He was nominated as the first rector for the future St Mary's Oblate Seminary, and went to study in Washington DC in 1961 and 62 to prepare for this ministry. While there he completed an MA in History at Catholic University of America, he later completed his PhD on the Oxford Movement at Monash University (1972).

As the founding Rector of St Mary's Seminary, Mulgrave from 1963 to 1973, he established a close relationship with the nearby Monash University and combined the traditional training in philosophy with a university degree.

Austin served as the Australia Provincial from 1976 to 1983.

He then continued his significant and influential academic career: Foundation Master, Catholic Theological College, Melbourne, 1972-76; Vice-President of Melbourne College of Divinity, 1974-76; President of Melbourne College of Divinity, 1976-78. He has been a lecturer at CTC since 1972, including two further stints as Master, from 1992-94 and then again 1998-2002. He was a Professor in the Department of Church History at CTC until 2022 and led overseas study tours as part of his courses in Christian Spirituality. His areas of expertise include Julian of Norwich and Cardinal Newman.

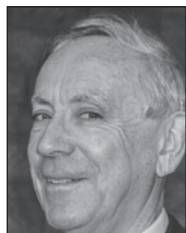
His writings include the history of the Australian Oblates up to 1994, *A Little By Ourselves*; books on Julian of Norwich, *The Cloud of Unknowing* and John Henry Newman, *A Developing Spirituality* (2012).

In 2004 Austin received the Order of Australia for services to Theological Education.

Austin has been an outstanding priest and dedicated Oblate of Mary Immaculate. He was highly capable as well as being a man of prayer and deep spirituality.

He was influential in the human and spiritual formation of many Oblates, Lay people, Religious and Priests in Australia. In his 72 years as an Oblate, he was a pillar of the Australian Province and will be greatly missed. He was buried at Springvale on 12 July following a Requiem Mass at St John Vianney's Mulgrave attended by around 60 priests, two archbishops and five bishops.

Continued page 36



A Jesuit for 71 years and a priest for 59 years, John died after a massive stroke at Campion House, Kew (Melbourne) on 7 June. Educated by the Christian Brothers at CBC St Kilda and St Kevin's Toorak, he proceeded to graduate with a Bachelor of Music from the Conservatorium at Melbourne University. A career as a concert pianist beckoned him, but he surprised his teachers by joining the Jesuits instead, entering Loyola College, Watsonia in 1952. In his six years there he made an indelible impression on his confrères in the role of choirmaster, spending much time and energy in raising their standard to unheard of heights. He covered traditional liturgical repertoire and introduced Gelineau's psalm settings and his own hymn compositions, most notably his four-part setting, *All power is given to me* (from Matt 28:18-20), which was used to farewell young missionaries to India for many years.

In Theology John showed a marked aptitude for biblical studies. He heard the renowned New Testament scholar, Eduard Schweizer, lecture in Sydney. Subsequently, John spent 1974 studying Mark's Gospel under Schweizer at the University of Zürich. For John it was THE Gospel. He felt that the others softened Mark's sharp edges.

In the seven years before then, John had exercised an extraordinary ministry as a university chaplain in Perth. His Sunday liturgies attracted a strong, devoted following. He demonstrated against the Vietnam war and the Springboks Tour in 1971. He led university graduates to Calcutta to experience life amongst the poor with Brother Andrew (formerly Ian Travers-Ball SJ) and his Missionaries of Charity.

After his return from Zürich, John initially assisted the Master of Novices at Canisius College in Sydney, then moved into extra-presbyteral parish ministry, firstly with Fr Ted Kennedy at Redfern, then at Richmond in Melbourne. Then it was back to Perth, where he spent 33 years working for the archdiocese in various capacities, most notably as chaplain to prisoners and people with mental illness and intellectual disability. He was also a music examiner and pianist whose performances were broadcast on ABC radio. Those years in Perth were interrupted by two years as chaplain at RMIT in Melbourne.

At the age of 81 John relinquished his 40 years of fruitful priestly ministry in the West and moved to Campion House in Melbourne, where he spent his last decade ministering to ex-prisoners and migrants and supplying Masses for the Carmelite Sisters at Kew and aged care residents at Abbotsford.

Reserved, courteous, intense, humble and frugal, John was a man of strong convictions and radical commitment, passionate about caring for creation and following the poor Jesus to the margins of society, ministering to the hurt and broken people he found there.

✠ John, a much-loved son of Kevin and Brenda, twin brother of Michael and brother of Margaret and Colleen RSJ, passed away unexpectedly, but peacefully in Bathurst District Hospital, NSW.

Born in Sydney, John began his schooling at Brigidine Randwick, and continued with the Marist Brothers in Parkes, at Red Bend College, Forbes, and finally De La Salle, Lakemba. He entered the seminary at Springwood in 1963 and was ordained for Sydney on 23 August, 1969.

He accepted the challenge of Vatican II in his parish appointments at Mosman (twice), Roseberry, Ryde, The Entrance, Kogarah and Balmain. Wherever he ministered he strongly supported Catholic education and its availability to all. While at The Entrance, he worked with the Catholic Education Office to build the first secondary school, Mater Dei at Tuggerah, and was involved with the amalgamation of St Joseph's Kogarah years 7 -10 with Hurstville to become Bethany, providing students access to the HSC. Balmain parish acknowledged his legacy by retaining the primacy school when under threat of closure.

He was also appointed Prison Chaplain at Long Bay and Silverwater, which took him to other prisons in NSW as well. He showed compassion to the most hardened and repeat offenders, as well as those serving a minimal sentence. His manner gained the trust of inmates which was highlighted in a TV appearance reinforcing this trust.

John was a natural athlete and excelled in any sport he played – tennis, rugby league, cricket, golf. Sporting injuries eventually caught up with him and after major shoulder surgery he took some time out, recuperating in country NSW. This led him to apply to transfer to the Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese, ministering firstly at Narromine and eventually becoming the Parish Priest of Parkes. As early-onset dementia emerged, John retired and moved to St Catherine's Aged Care Bathurst in 2020.

John was at ease in the presence of everyone no matter their social or financial status. He showed great compassion to the poor and marginalised. John's love of the scriptures and his devotion to the Eucharist, the Rosary, St Martin de Porres, and Mary MacKillop were expressed by the way he lived his life and ministered to those in his care. May he rest in peace.

NOEL MOLLOY**08/01/1940 – 06/07/2023**

 After completing his ecclesiastical studies at St Patrick College Manly, Noel was ordained priest in St Mary's Cathedral on 7 December 1968.

Noel began his ministry in the Sydney Archdiocese but in August 1977 he moved to Adelaide (for family reasons) and he was incardinated into Adelaide Archdiocese the next year.

Over the years Noel served in several parishes, including Glenelg, Bordertown, Kangaroo Island, and St Marys, where he was also Chaplain to Flinders University. He also served in Yorketown, Birdwood and Taperoo.

Noel was a very gifted person and was appointed to many committees: The Senate of priests, Clergy Life and Ministry, Jordan Kennedy Committee, The Council of Priests, Diocesan Pastoral Council and Pastoral Director at the Seminary, and Director of Continuing Education of Priests.


In May 2003 Noel moved back to Sydney where he served as Resource Consultant at the Broken Bay Institute. In Jan 2005 Noel retired from formal ministry to live at The Entrance. But he still had a giving spirit and served as a Cruise Ship Chaplain on six occasions.

In 2019 Noel decided to move back to his home diocese and took up residence at an apartment in Leabrook, SA.

In June 2023 his relatives agreed to take him to visit family in NSW, but while away his health deteriorated and he was admitted to a nursing home in McLean near Gosford, and this is where he died on 6 July.

His funeral Mass was celebrated at St Patrick's church East Gosford. His remains were cremated and his ashes returned to SA to be interred in the Birdwood cemetery where Noel had served as Parish Priest.

KEVIN O'LOUGHLIN**23/06/1935 – 12/07/2023**

 Kevin was born and grew up in Pinnaroo near the SA/Victoria border. He attended Sacred Heart College and he worked for some years before entering St Francis Xavier Seminary, following his brother James who was ordained in Rome in 1954 (and died in December 2019). Kevin was ordained in Adelaide on 9 July 1966.


He had brief appointments as Assistant priest in the Cathedral, Thebarton and Woodville before being appointed Parish Priest in Bordertown. Six years later he moved to the Barossa Valley as PP for nine years before going to Victor Harbour and finally to Lower North Adelaide in 1994 where he remained until his retirement.

Meanwhile he served on various committees, including the Justice & Peace Commission, the Senate of Priests, the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee and also the Clergy Appointment Board.

It was in his work as Chaplain at the Women's & Children's Hospital in North Adelaide that Kevin left his mark. He was widely renowned for his dedicated care for children, their parents and also hospital staff. The hospital had a special place in his life because he spent a lot of his life there as he was born with club feet and endured 18 months in plaster. Even after he retired as Parish Priest he continued his chaplaincy work for many years. He was given a special farewell when he ended his ministry at the hospital after 24 years.

May he rest in peace.

PETER QUINN**20/09/1930 – 14/01/2023**

 Peter Quinn, a priest of the Sandhurst Diocese for about 70 years would frequently introduce himself with the most lowly of titles, "from Tungamah State School No 2678". However, one would quickly be won over by his gentle charm and easy sense of humour. It should have been no surprise that Peter, in the wake of Vatican 11, would opt to work amongst the poorest in Lima, Peru.

The Columban fathers readily accepted him as a volunteer and with the hope that he had some facility with languages and added an ability to sing which is always helpful. Peter quickly excelled in both Spanish and lovely Latin American folk songs. It was probably not expected, but Peter quickly showed leadership qualities in Church circles and indeed among Columban fathers. He was appointed parish priest of an oversized shanty town El Ermitano and worked there with three younger Irish priests. When the day's work was done, led by Peter, they would make great music with Spanish and Irish song.

The many thousands of poverty-stricken parishioners in the parish had great respect and love for their parish priest Padre Pedro. The Peruvian culture became second nature to their tall affable Padrecito.

The Columban fathers and parishioners were one day devastated to hear the news of a serious illness that had taken hold of

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RETURNED TO GOD

Peter. It meant he had to return to Australia. Attempts to regain full health proved inadequate. Peter felt this grief for all his remaining years back in Sandhurst. However, apart from his stories of the beautiful people he had left behind, he soon became the champion of lay involvement in parishes back here in Sandhurst. His great commitment to the RCIA is just one example. Even in his very advanced years his friends frequently asked him to play his guitar and with a gentle baritone voice recall his years in Peru.

Adios Padrecito!

EDWARD (EDDIE) BERNARD WELLING

01/09/1938 – 28/04/2023

 Edward Welling was born in Holland where he received his early education and also commenced his ecclesiastical studies with the Holy Spirit Fathers. When the family migrated to Australia, he resumed his studies at St Francis Xavier Seminary in Adelaide.

He was ordained priest on 27 June 1964 and served as Assistant Priest in Elizabeth South, Kurralta Park, and Edwardstown. In January 1973 he was appointed Parish Priest at Maitland for six years. After long service leave, he moved to Glenelg where he is remembered for doing lots of home visitation. Edward was Parish Priest for six-year terms at Woodville and then Gawler, at Edwardstown for eight years and finally his last appointment June 2003 was to Aberfoyle Park where he remained until his retirement in September 2013. He was chaplain to the Catholic Women's League from 2008 to 2015.

During his 52 years of ministry Eddie used all his gifts and talents for the good of souls. In retirement he lived at the retirement units for priests at Murphy Villa where he remained until declining health meant he required nursing care at Southern Cross Care at Buckland Park.

He died on 28 April 2023 in Holy Week and his funeral Mass was celebrated at the Sacred Heart Church at Semaphore on 10 May 2023. May he rest in peace. ☕

Returned to God, but no obit received. We hold them in prayer.

† John Archbold OMI (Oblate Fathers).....	17/11/2022
† Carl Ashton (Diocese of Paramatta).....	13/07/2022
† Anton Bulla SVD (Divine Word Missionaries).....	11/07/2023
† John Burke SM (Marist Fathers).....	24/05/2023
† Theodore Gillian OFM (Franciscans).....	20/04/2023
† Anthony King SM (Marist Fathers).....	27/06/2023
† Christopher O'Neil (Port Pirie).....	14/05/2023

Please email obits to Sally at: national.office@ncp.catholic.org.au

Specifications: **Text as a Word Document (max. 350 words)**

Digital photos not less than 300 KB sent as a separate .JPG file *(not to be included in the Word Document)*.

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May the souls of the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.*



Election for NCP Chairman

1st January 2024 – 31 December 2026

I hereby call for nominations for the position of Chairman of the National Council of Priests of Australia.
Jamie Collins, NCP Secretary

- Both the person being nominated and the nominator must be financial NCP members and both must sign the nomination form.
- The term of office is three (3) years with the option of nominating for a further three (3) years. (Maximum term for all committee positions – six (6) consecutive years.)
- The term of office will commence on 01/01/2024 and conclude on 31/12/2026.
- Nomination forms must be received at the National Office by **midnight 30 September 2023** (mail or email).

PART 1 – MEMBER BEING NOMINATED

Name of Member being nominated _____

Address of Member being nominated _____

I (member nominated) _____ accept this nomination.

Signature of Member being nominated _____ Date: _____

PART 2 – NOMINATOR'S DETAILS

Name of Nominator _____

Address of Nominator _____

Signature of Nominator _____ Date _____

NOMINATIONS CLOSE AT MIDNIGHT, 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Mail: Returning Officer
NCP National Office
PO Box 295
Belmont VIC 3216

E: national.office@ncp.catholic.org.au



The National Council of Priests of Australia (NCP)

The National Council of Priests (NCP) is an Australia-wide organisation of Catholic Clergy (Bishops, Priests & Deacons) and Associate Members (Lay, Religious & Seminarians) who join together to support each other in their ministry in the Church.

Founded in 1970 in the Spirit of Vatican II, the NCP is committed to the fraternity and further education of clergy and to representing clergy in the public forum.

The Objects and Purposes of the Council

- To promote a spirit of fraternity among members and other clerics of the Catholic Church in Australia.
- To devise ways and means for members and others to better serve the people to whom they are called to minister.
- To provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and to promote the spirit of ecumenism and to establish ecumenical links.
- To effect a liaison with other national bodies of religious women and men and with national bodies of laity.
- To maintain contact with similar associations.
- To be a consultative body to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.